

BUSINESS PROFILE

Not your traditional Harley Street doctor

DR HERALD GAIER is one of the world's leading homoeopathic authorities and has done extensive research on modern non-orthodox medicine.

By Alexis Flynn

GOOGLE might just be the twenty first century answer to Burke's Peerage. As a fame barometer it's hard to find a better way of assessing just who is who in the zoo. Enter in South African naturopathic physician Dr Harald C Gaier, and it will immediately result in reams and reams of pages to links and sites all over the world.

Hardly surprising when you consider that Gaier is one of the world's leading homoeopathic authorities. Having authored the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Homoeopathy for Harper Collins and written numerous papers for a variety of scientific journals, his name really is synonymous with modern contemporary medicine.

Greeting me with a warm smile and a fresh latté in his spacious Harley Street consulting rooms, Gaier comes across as anything but the caricature cold, aloof and distant medical man. Retaining the dignified calm that is the profession's signature, he remains an eager and enthusiastic student of health and the human condition.

The various branches of medicine are merely a difference in emphasis. They all deal with one essential thing – the human body and the health of the human being. Where the difference lies can often be what motivates that emphasis.

Among Gaier's fields of research – aside from his day to day practice is an interest in medical economics and the way that medicine has evolved to where it is today.

"Modern orthodox medicine is often underscored by financial imperatives," he explains. "Providing someone with drugs that alleviate symptoms but don't address the underlying cause of their complaint is good for business as it ensures a steady, ongoing demand to meet the supply of whatever drugs or treatments are being supplied."

Patients that are healthy because they are able to prevent themselves getting sick in the first place are not good customers. That message – that prevention is better than cure – does not lie at the



heart of orthodox, rational medicine."

In contrast, Gaier says, naturopathy and homoeopathy are patient-orientated, empirical medicine.

"Orthodox medicine and non-orthodox medicine are, as the names suggest, the result of a schism that occurred many years ago. What we describe as conventional medicine today was indistinguishable from what we call alternative medicine, hundreds of years ago. There was a time when applying poultices was an accepted treatment, just as other more dubious practices like bloodletting and trepanning were. As society has developed, so too has our knowledge of what works and doesn't. Unfortunately, along the way there was a decisive break between what I call the rational and empirical branches of medicine."

He goes on to explain: "What we call conventional medicine has to define the rational approach – analysing and defining the human body in an attempt to define what makes us sick. On the other hand, non-orthodox medicine has come from an empirical tradition of seeing what works and using that to prevent illness by maintaining health."

Using what works is what it comes down to and judging by the kudos surrounding Dr Gaier's practice, his treatments do just that – keep people well.

"I believe in two things," he says. "That there are non-orthodox medical treatments for virtually any disorder, which have been shown as successful in hard-science backed, published investigations. I know this because I have published reviews regularly on such investigations for the past thirteen years."

"Secondly, I do not believe in dismissing out of hand any traditional therapeutic approach that can, perhaps, not yet be fully explained in terms that accord with Western science."

Using a variety of treatment methods including acupuncture, herbs, osteopathy and diet, Gaier sees a diverse group of patients and is qualified to dispense advice on a variety of areas.

Born in Austria Gaier moved to South Africa as an 11-year-old. He initially studied in Johannesburg and later travelled extensively through Africa, where he has documented many of the natural and traditional treatments used throughout the continent. After spending time in Austria, where he is registered with the Austrian General Medical Council, he moved to England in the late 1980s.

His career in the UK has included positions as Director of Medical Research at the Hale Clinic and the Diagnostic Centre before taking up his present position at the Health Equation in Harley Street.

► For more information on Dr Gaier, visit www.drgaier.com

ASK THE EXPERT Hannes Breytenbach

Q I am currently working in London on a Working Holiday Makers' Visa. I was told by an agency that I can only work for 12 months on this visa and must take the rest as 'holiday'. When I was issued the visa earlier this year, the ruling was you could work for 24 months. I applied for my visa in January and received it at the end of January – although it's dated to start work in the UK at the end of March. What is the ruling on this? Can I work 12 or 24 months?



A With effect from 8 February 2005 a working holidaymaker may only work for a maximum of 12 months during their stay. A working holidaymaker who received entry clearance after this date will fall under these new rules and as yours is dated to start at the end of March 2005, you are subject to the new rules. Persons who received their entry clearance effective prior to 8 February 2005 are subject to the previous rules, which means they can work throughout the two year working holiday.

Hannes Breytenbach is the Senior Partner at Breytenbachs, a solicitors firm in London. For more information call 020 7499 3111.

Kyle Harris

Q If I send money home, is it taxable in South Africa?

A This is a difficult question, as you can control whether it is taxable depending on how you send it home (visit www.askharry.co.za for more on this). Perhaps a more interesting question is whether you can make a profit on sending money home.

Over the past six months the exchange rates have moved between a high of R12.55 on the 5th of June and a low of R10.80 to the pound on the 4th of January. That is a 14% difference. It may not sound like much, but if it is done correctly this 14% growth is not taxable in SA or the UK. Now we are talking about 14% after tax, which is the equivalent of 23% if you had

to earn it again. It is actually worth a lot of money to you.

How do you choose the apex of the market? It is almost impossible, but you can make a more informed decision by understanding basic economic data. There is a section on the Ask Harry website that consists of projections given by banking economists. They translate difficult data into relatively simple information for you to follow and it only takes ten minutes a week to read it. New information is uploaded every Friday evening.

Boring? Perhaps, but tell me another way that can give you a potential return of 23% over six months for ten minutes of reading per week.

I am not advocating you start trading in currency; do not be tempted. Focus on



maximising the rands you get for your pounds by keeping informed. An extra fourteen percent of rands on all the pounds you have managed to save, that could equate to enough money for a deposit on a house.

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We can supply the structure through which to contract whilst here in the UK that will give you the highest return on your income - ideal for 2-year Working Holiday makers.