

My Brief Encounter with an Unlicensed Naturopath

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In November 2016, my residential community held a health expo to help families and individuals learn about local services such as home care, physical therapy, audiology, hospice, home modification, home organizers, and money management. The event was held in a large room where more than 30 exhibitors answered questions and displayed literature on tables set up throughout the room. I was familiar with most of them and can attest to the fact that they offer high-quality service. As often happens, however, when expo participants are not carefully screened to be sure their offerings have a scientific basis, a reiki practitioner and an enthusiastic young woman who described herself as a naturopath were also there.

The woman, whose name was Rebecca Hale, displayed a poster that related saliva pH to about 20 health problems and invited people to test their saliva. To carry out the test, she had me touch a pH strip to my tongue and compared the color of the strip to a scale on a hand-held dispenser that looked like the one pictured to the right.

(Since I am not sure which company made her dispenser, I have whited out the brand name.) My reading was in the alkaline range, which she said might mean various possibilities (that she rattled off), or could have been influenced by something I ate at the expo (which would mean that the test was meaningless). Then she handed me a card that offered “25% off on an RBTI test” at her office if I book an appointment within a week to get her “grand-opening discount.” Another card she gave me identified her as the owner and founder of Natural Health Strategies and listed her credentials as “RNHP, D.PSc.”



When I got home, I looked online for information about the test. RBTI stands “Reams Biological Theory of Ionization.” It turned out that I had investigated it many years ago when it was called Reams testing. It is also called “Biological Immunity Analysis” or “BIA.” [1]

Background Information

Hale launched Natural Health Strategies LLC in Silver Spring, Maryland, in September 2015. The company’s Web sites states that she “addresses the root cause of your health concerns” [1] and “uses a holistic and naturopathic approach to health that focuses on the underlying causes of your concerns.” [2] In October 2016, Hale announced the opening of her Chapel Hill office this way in a press release:

Natural Health Strategies (NHS), a leading provider of Naturopathic counseling and RBTI (Reams) testing in the Washington, DC area, announced their expansion to a new office in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. “My practice provides an affordable, simple, and noninvasive way to take control of your health and improve the way you look and feel naturally,” explained Rebecca Hale, owner of Natural Health Strategies. “I’m excited to bring my personalized health solutions to the Research Triangle.”

Rebecca founded Natural Health Strategies after overcoming her own chronic illness with the goal to help others improve their health naturally. NHS combines testing with a natural, holistic approach to uncover the root cause of health issues, and provides clients with a quantifiable assessment of their body chemistry. Instead of wasting time and money guessing, clients learn specifically what diet, lifestyle, supplements, and homeopathic remedies are best for them during a one hour session with a Naturopathic Practitioner [3].

Hale’s background is described in a YouTube Video [4] and on her [LinkedIn page](#) page. She received bachelor’s degrees in accounting and information systems from the University of Maryland in 2012 and worked in accounting and tax-related jobs for about two years. Then she worked for 16 months for as a “brand ambassador” for Hope Foods, during which she “coordinated with 30 difference natural food stores to schedule up to 8 product demos for two different companies (Hope Foods and Carla Hall).” In April 2015, she received a naturopathic practitioner (NP) diploma from the New Eden School of Natural Health & Herbal Studies. The “RNHP” designation, which stands for Registered Natural Health Practitioner, is available from the [International Association of Natural Health Practitioners \(IANHP\)](#).

New Eden offers correspondence courses intended to prepare “natural health consultants and practitioners” for employment in health food stores, whole food markets, vitamin companies, health clinics, wellness centers, spas, health clubs, gyms, and weight loss centers, as well as their own natural health business or consultation service. Its Naturopathic Practitioner (NP) diploma program, which costs \$2,000, is said to provide “the education needed to offer competent naturopathic counseling.” It consists of 20 courses totaling “40 credit hours” that are presented in eBooks, most of which were written by the school’s founder and president, Lawrence DeSantis, CN, CFMP, ND, D.PSc. The courses include anatomy and physiology; chemistry basics; herbology; natural health assessments; natural health approaches; traditional naturopathic approaches; iridology; energy medicine; Bach flower remedies; anti-aging and longevity approaches; wellness counseling; and starting your business. Passage of an open book exam is required for each course. The entire program is said to take “an average of 12 months or more to complete.” [5]

The school’s Web site states that it is accredited by the Transworld Accrediting Commission [6]. However, this entity is not recognized by the U.S. Secretary of Education and thus has no recognized academic standing [7]. The site also notes that the school is approved by the Pastoral Medical Association (PMA), which “offers a protective license that is legal in all 50 States and abroad which provides a broad scope of practice for its licensees.” [6] The PMA does issue “licenses” and a “D.PSc.” credential, but I do not believe these allow their holders to practice any form of health care that is subject to state regulation [8]. In a YouTube video, Hale says this abbreviation stands for “Diplomat [*sic*] of Pastoral Science.” [4]

DeSantis has no accredited degree in any form of health care. A biographical sketch posted in 2001 stated that in 1986, he had earned a degree in nutripathy after completing a 3-year nutrition curriculum through North American College in Scottsdale, Arizona, spent 17 years doing nutrition counseling and colon therapy at a clinic in Italy, and subsequently worked for three years advising health-food-store counselors what products to buy [9]. Neither North American College nor “nutripathy degrees” have any recognized academic or professional standing.

RBTI Testing

The urine/saliva test was developed about more than 50 years ago by Carey Reams (1910-1985), a self-proclaimed biophysicist who was prosecuted during the 1970s for practicing medicine without a license.

Reams, who also claimed to be guided by God, devised “a mathematical formula for perfect health, based on the biophysical frequencies of living matter.” During the 1980s, the leading advocate of Reams’s ideas was Gary Martin, who taught what he called “nutripathy,” a form of counseling centered around the results of

the Reams test, which he called your nutripathic portrait or profile. He now calls the test “Biological Immunity Analysis” or “BIA.” DeSantis, in turn, learned about the test by studying with Martin. Hale says she learned about the test by studying with [Michael Olszta](#).

Martin’s book, *Nutripathy: The Final Solution to Your Health Dilemma*, expressed the formula as “1.5 6.4/ 6.4 7 1 3/3.” The first three numbers are said to represent sugars excreted in the urine and the acidity (pH) of the urine and saliva, and indicate how much “energy input” you have. The other numbers, said to represent your “mineral salts index, urine debris index and nitrate nitrogens over the ammoniacal nitrogens index,” are said to indicate how much energy your metabolism is using. “A low energy input and high energy drain,” says the book, “means degeneration, rot, decay and death.” [10]. To fix these alleged problems, Martin and his followers offered a large variety of supplement products.

Reams testing and its associated trappings are utter nonsense. Blood and most tissues in the body have a pH of about 7.4, which is slightly alkaline. Blood pH is maintained within a narrow range by homeostatic mechanisms that involve the blood, kidneys, and lungs. Most disease states do not significantly affect blood pH. Those that do, such as respiratory failure and diabetic ketoacidosis, would be diagnosed with tests of the blood, not saliva or urine. Diet can alter the pH of urine, which can be important in preventing kidney stones. However, the pH of the blood will still remain within its narrow range. Saliva tests only measure the pH of the mouth, which is influenced by diet and does not reflect either the pH or the health status of the rest of the body. For all of these reasons, it is senseless to use saliva pH as a basis for recommending diets or dietary supplements [12].

Hale’s Offerings

Hale’s Web site described her approach this way:

Each consultation is an hour-long session. . . . During that hour we will take time to consider your lifestyle, your health concerns, and your health goals. A noninvasive RBTI test will then be administered on a sample of urine & saliva to reveal dysfunctional patterns occurring within the body due to vitamin and mineral deficiencies. After analyzing your test results Rebecca will go over personalized diet and lifestyle adjustments as well as all-natural supplements to support your specific body chemistry. Depending on your health goals recommended follow-up appointments will range from within 2 to 6 weeks [13].

The site's home page listed "chronic indigestion; heart health; weight loss & weight maintenance; headaches & anxiety; low energy levels; disease prevention; and more" as health problems within Hale's scope and said that she offered "noninvasive testing with immediate, same day results; holistic natural health services; balance & detox plans; balance & restore plans; natural health lifestyle coaching; face, tongue & nail analysis; and more." [2] The cost of her services ranged from \$99 for one RBTI test and analysis to \$549 for a 5-visit package of services intended to "balance, remove, stabilize, and revitalize."

In 2018, Hale included blood sugar control; hormonal imbalances; migraines; constipation & diarrhea; moods; thyroid & adrenal concerns; low energy & lack of focus; heart, liver & kidney health; acne & rash-prone skin; lyme disease symptoms; and candida overgrowth in a list of "health concerns we help clients can help with."

The blog on Hale's site included articles that provide misleading information. One advised that flu shots "are not effective," [14] which is flat-out false. Another improperly advised that dietary supplements, aromatherapy, and Bach Rescue Remedy are effective treatments for anxiety [15]. Another falsely claimed that colloidal silver is effective against yeast infections, viruses (including HIV/AIDS), tuberculosis, Lyme disease, and bacterial pneumonia, and can "aid the growth and health of a baby during pregnancy." [16] Another falsely claimed that RBTI tests can tell her whether someone is at risk for a fatal heart attack [17]. Another even suggested that her approach was generally superior to that of standard medical care:

Conventional medicine has gotten so focused on getting rid of our symptoms fast that it is no longer addressing the root cause of our illnesses. Even though these pills and potions might help us feel better in the short-term, over time they result in side-effects and a weakened immune system. This leaves us vulnerable to whole new variety of illnesses. . .

No matter how long you've been suffering from poor health there are **always** simple actions you can take **today** to start feeling better immediately [18].

In October 2019, Hale announced that she had gotten married and was relocating her practice to California. She now practices under her married name, Rebecca Johnson. In addition to offering services locally, she also offers remote RBTI testing and consultations via Zoom.

My Opinion

I do not believe that correspondence courses can enable people to become competent health advisers. Even if they could, I do not believe that RBTI testing can determine the “underlying cause” of anyone’s health problems or whether or not someone has a vitamin or mineral deficiency. Hale’s enthusiasm may inspire some clients to improve their diet or achieve medically recommended exercise levels. But it seems more likely to me that she will arouse unnecessary concerns, steer people away from effective medical care, and cause many of her clients to buy products they don’t need.

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