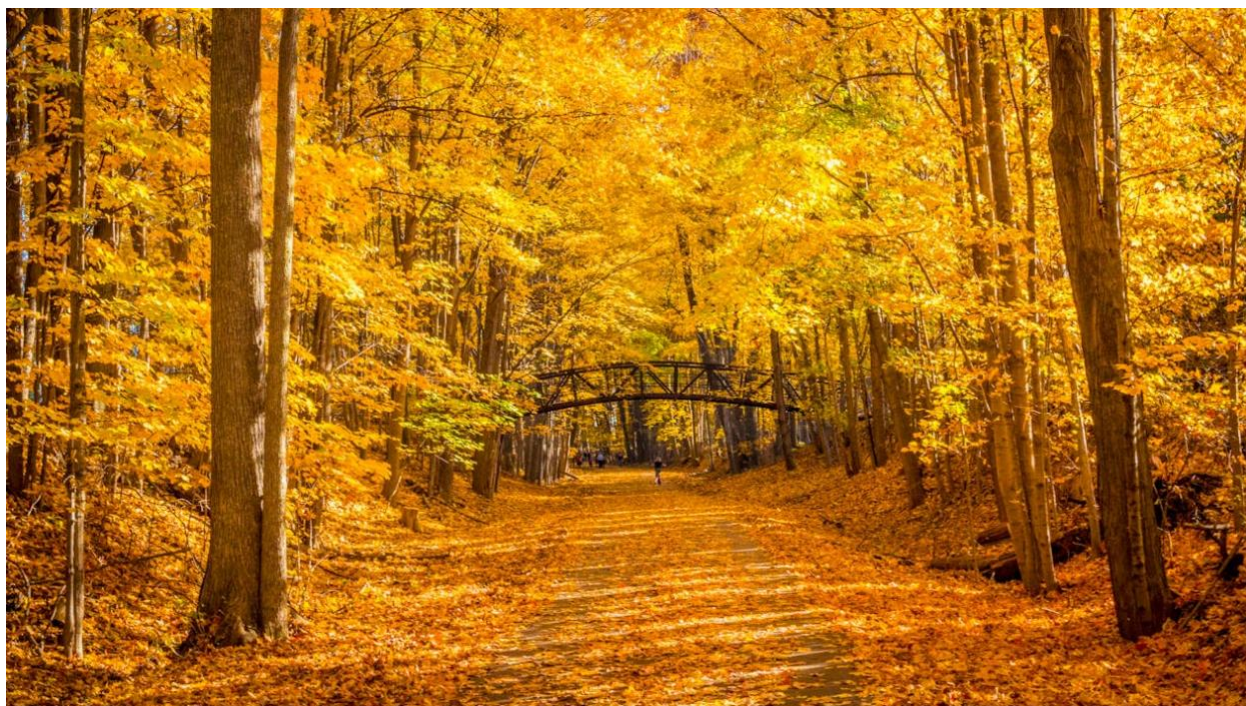




Journey deep into the Forest at its time of change, Source: Free Stock Photos

DR. RIM: A JOURNEY INTO PHYTOTHERAPY AND ENDOBIOGENY

Interviewer: Manel Zghidi (MZ)

Interviewee: Dr. Rim Bouaziz Krichen (RBK)

MZ: Hello Dr. Rim, could you introduce yourself to our readers?

RBK: Hello, I am Dr. Rim Bouaziz Krichen, a general practitioner with a degree from the Faculty of Medicine in Sfax. I completed my thesis in 2004 and have been practicing privately since 2006. I am also qualified in homeopathy and have a masters degree in emergency medicine obtained in 2007, and another in auriculotherapy from 2013. My journey into phytotherapy began in 2014, and I furthered my studies by enrolling in a masters program titled "Endobiogeny and Clinical Phytotherapy" at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Monastir, Tunisia. This program was created towards the end of the 1980s by the Tunisian Association of Medicinal Plants, led

by the eminent Professor Rachid Chemli in collaboration with the Faculty of Pharmacy of Monastir. The first cohorts had the privilege of being taught by Dr. Durauffour, the father of Endobiogeny. Over 20 years later, I had the opportunity to learn from one of his distinguished disciples, Dr. Kamyar, who developed the concept of the Biology of Functions that complements Dr. Durauffour's theory of Endobiogeny. I have been teaching phytotherapy and Endobiogeny for the past three years.

MZ: How did you discover your passion for phytotherapy? What really drew you to this discipline?

RBK: My journey into phytotherapy began in childhood, influenced by my grandmother's use of plant-based remedies, which she favored despite my mother's nursing background. The efficacy of

these natural treatments, coupled with their minimal side effects, sparked my interest. This traditional wisdom, juxtaposed with the tangible benefits I experienced, steered me towards the path of phytotherapy, compelling me to explore the healing power of plants and their potential to complement conventional medicine.

MZ: Was there a defining moment or experience that convinced you to pursue this path?

RBK: Indeed, a pivotal moment in my career was when I successfully treated a patient with chronic psoriasis using phytotherapy. This patient had endured psoriasis for seven years, consulting numerous dermatologists without seeing any improvement. During a consultation for a seemingly unrelated viral sore throat, I proposed a herbal treatment regimen for his psoriasis. He agreed to try this alternative approach. Remarkably, we observed significant improvements, which not only alleviated his symptoms but also enhanced his quality of life. This experience underscored the potential of phytotherapy to address complex dermatological conditions effectively and reinforced my commitment to integrating herbal medicine into my practice. It was a profound validation of the power of natural remedies and marked a significant turning point in my medical journey, steering me towards specializing in phytotherapy and Endobiogeny.

MZ: How have you seen phytotherapy evolve since the beginning of your career? How have you adapted your practice to these changes?

RBK: Over the years, phytotherapy has undergone a profound transformation, transitioning from a niche alternative to a widely recognized and integral component of integrative medicine. This evolution has been marked by a greater scientific understanding and validation of herbal treatments, which has significantly enhanced their acceptance within the medical community. To keep pace with these advancements, I have committed to continuous professional development, engaging in rigorous academic training and staying abreast of the latest research through scholarly articles and books. Additionally, I have embraced the practice of

innovative, evidence-based treatments, integrating them into my therapeutic arsenal. This proactive approach has allowed me to provide my patients with the most current and effective phytotherapeutic care, ensuring that my practice remains at the forefront of the field.

MZ: What was your first impression upon discovering Endobiogeny, and how have you integrated it into your daily practice?

RBK: Discovering Endobiogeny was enlightening; it answered many questions and explained why certain treatments, both herbal and allopathic, had previously failed. It revolutionized my way of thinking and interpreting medical cases. In my daily practice, regardless of the consultation reason, I strive to gather as many clinical signs as possible through thorough interviews and examinations. I document these findings discreetly until I fully understand the patient's biological terrain. This approach allows me to create a geographical map of the patient's health, enabling me to offer endobiogenic solutions to resolve previous treatment failures or to prevent potential complications from existing conditions.

MZ: What do you believe is the significance of Endobiogeny in the evolution of phytotherapy?

RBK: The advent of Endobiogeny has been transformative for phytotherapy, steering it away from the conventional allopathic model that often relies on a one-size-fits-all approach. This innovative field has introduced a scientific and methodical framework for the application of medicinal plants, emphasizing the necessity of tailoring treatments to the individual's unique physiological landscape. Endobiogeny champions the concept of the biological terrain of each patient, advocating for a treatment strategy that is as unique as the individual receiving it. This shift towards personalized medicine has not only refined the precision and adaptability of phytotherapy but has also solidified its standing as a scientifically rigorous discipline. It has the capacity to address a broad spectrum of medical conditions more effectively by acknowledging and respecting the complexity and uniqueness of each patient. The integration of

Endobiogeny into phytotherapy marks a significant leap forward, offering a more holistic and patient-centric approach to healing. It bridges the gap between the ancient wisdom of herbal medicine and contemporary scientific insights, enhancing the therapeutic efficacy of phytotherapy and aligning it more closely with the principles of personalized medicine. This evolution represents a pivotal moment in the field, promising a future where treatments are not only effective but also harmoniously aligned with the natural physiology of the patient, ensuring treatments that are both effective and respectful of the body's inherent complexity.

MZ: Could you share a particularly challenging case where phytotherapy and Endobiogeny played a key role in the healing process?

RBK: Certainly. A standout case involved a 35-year-old woman battling scleroderma. Employing an endobiogenic approach alongside phytotherapy, we achieved significant improvements in her condition. We managed to reduce her generalized edema, enhance the coloration and microvascularization of her skin, and alleviate her trophic disturbances. Remarkably, we were also able to discontinue her conventional medications, including plaquenil and corticosteroids. Most importantly, we helped her overcome depression. While it wasn't a complete cure, the marked improvement enabled her to resume a normal life, showcasing the effectiveness of our integrated approach.

MZ: What discovery or experience in field medicine are you most proud of?

RBK: I am particularly proud of my expertise in managing spasmophilic terrains in my patients. Through Endobiogeny and the biology of functions, I've gained a profound understanding of the radial actions of hormones, which has significantly clarified my perception of my patients' conditions. This deep insight allows for a more rational and personalized approach to their health issues. It has revolutionized my medical practice by enabling me to address each case with enhanced precision and effectiveness. This approach not only improves

patient outcomes but also enriches the therapeutic relationship by providing treatments that are finely tuned to the individual's unique physiological landscape. This achievement has not only validated the principles of Endobiogeny in my practice but has also underscored the importance of a holistic and integrative approach in modern medicine.

MZ: How do you approach educating and advising patients who are encountering phytotherapy and Endobiogeny for the first time?

RBK: When introducing patients to phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, I emphasize that these are not just alternative therapies but serious, scientifically grounded treatment strategies tailored to each individual's unique physiological makeup. I begin by establishing a relationship based on trust, patience, and education. It's crucial to clearly explain the benefits and the scientific rationale behind these approaches, demonstrating their effectiveness through successful case studies that resonate with the patient's condition. This educational process is designed to engage patients actively in their healing journey, empowering them with knowledge and understanding of how these therapies work holistically with their bodies. By doing so, patients feel more in control and committed to their treatment plans, seeing them not just as passive recipients of healthcare but as active participants in managing and improving their health. This approach not only demystifies the practices but also builds a strong, cooperative relationship where the patient's informed consent and active participation are key to the success of their treatment.

MZ: How has your relationship with your patients evolved due to your approach in phytotherapy and Endobiogeny?

RBK: The adoption of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny in my practice has profoundly transformed my relationship with patients. It has fostered a deeper level of trust and a shared belief in the effectiveness of these integrative approaches. This transformation is rooted in the personalized nature of the treatments, which are tailored to each patient's unique biological terrain,

enhancing their engagement and compliance with the therapeutic process. Patients appreciate the holistic attention to their health, which not only addresses their immediate symptoms but also their overall well-being. This approach has led to more successful outcomes, as patients feel more understood and supported, and are therefore more committed to their healing journey. The enhanced dialogue and education about their health conditions empower them to take an active role in their care, further strengthening our therapeutic alliance. This shift towards a more collaborative and informed partnership has been instrumental in achieving sustained health improvements and has significantly enriched the patient-practitioner relationship.

MZ: What are some common misconceptions about phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, and how do you address them?

RBK: Common misconceptions about phytotherapy and Endobiogeny include beliefs that these approaches are expensive, unreliable, time-consuming, and yield delayed results. To address these misconceptions, I ensure that patients actively seek out and understand these treatments before initiating them. I discuss with them the strategic approach to their care, highlighting the benefits of these therapies and providing examples of successful cases. This helps to set realistic expectations and demonstrates the effectiveness of these methods. Additionally, I explain how these approaches differ from conventional allopathic treatments, particularly in terms of side effects and overall health benefits. By educating patients about the holistic and preventive nature of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, I help them see these options not just as alternatives but as viable primary treatments that can offer significant health improvements. This educational approach fosters a more informed and cooperative patient relationship, enhancing the therapeutic process and outcomes.

MZ: How do you stay informed about the latest research and advancements in the field of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny?

RBK: Keeping abreast of the latest developments in phytotherapy and Endobiogeny is crucial to my practice, and I employ several strategies to ensure I remain at the cutting edge. My involvement in the "Endobiogeny and Clinical Phytotherapy" masters program at the Faculty of Pharmacy in Monastir is instrumental. Not only do I teach within this framework, but I also attend lectures by my colleagues, which provides a rich source of ongoing education. The masters program, especially, offers invaluable opportunities to engage in discussions with my peers and to absorb the insights from international guest speakers such as Dr. Kamyar Hedayat, the founder of the theory of the Biology of Functions. This theory significantly enhances and refines our understanding of the neuroendocrine terrain, adding depth and precision to our therapeutic approaches.

Additionally, I participate in weekly meetings organized by the regional offices of the Tunisian Association of Medicinal Plants. These gatherings are a treasure trove of knowledge, allowing for the exchange of ideas and experiences with fellow practitioners. I also make it a point to attend conferences and seminars hosted by learned societies, which are often graced by experts in the field.

Dedicated personal study plays a significant role in my continuous learning process. Each night, I devote 20 to 30 minutes to reading and re-reading course materials and published books. This daily ritual of study helps solidify my understanding and keeps me updated on new insights and methodologies.

Furthermore, I seek out wisdom from senior physicians and pharmacists who are experts in phytotherapy and Endobiogeny. Their experience and knowledge are invaluable resources that enrich my practice and understanding of these complex fields. Through these multifaceted approaches, I ensure that my knowledge remains current, allowing me to provide the most effective and informed care to my patients.

MZ: Could you share a specific anecdote where phytotherapy provided an unexpected solution to a health issue and what impact it had on the patient's life?

RBK: Certainly. I once treated a 28-year-old woman who came to me with concerns about hair loss. During our consultation, I discovered she had not menstruated for 18 months, a condition her gynecologist had diagnosed as premature menopause. This diagnosis had profound personal consequences, contributing to her divorce. Utilizing an endobiogenic approach, we addressed her hormonal imbalances with tailored phytotherapeutic interventions. Remarkably, her menstrual cycle resumed, and the restoration of her health had such a positive impact on her life that she remarried. This case exemplifies the profound effects that integrative and personalized medicine can have, not just on physical health, but on a patient's overall well-being and life circumstances.

MZ: How do you envision the future of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny within the current healthcare system?

RBK: The future of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny in our current healthcare system holds significant potential, though it faces considerable challenges. Despite their proven benefits and advancements, these disciplines often clash with the prevailing industrial and profit-driven approaches in healthcare. To truly integrate phytotherapy and Endobiogeny into mainstream medicine, a paradigm shift is necessary. We need to cultivate a broader acceptance among medical professionals, patients, industry stakeholders, and policymakers. This involves not only promoting awareness of the effectiveness and scientific basis of these treatments but also demonstrating their role in personalized and preventive care. By establishing robust, evidence-based research and fostering educational initiatives, we can reshape perceptions and practices. Moreover, integrating these therapies could lead to more sustainable, patient-centered care models that align with the growing demand for treatments that are not only effective but also align with the body's natural processes. The battle for their integration is indeed uphill, but with

persistent efforts to educate and innovate within the field, phytotherapy and Endobiogeny can become integral components of a more holistic healthcare paradigm.

MZ: In your professional opinion, is there a specific plant or herb that is currently underutilized in modern medicine but could offer significant benefits?

RBK: Certainly. Pichi, or *Fabiana imbricata*, is a plant with a broad spectrum of therapeutic actions, particularly beneficial for the digestive and endocrine systems. Its primary tropism includes significant effects on the digestive sphere, where it acts as a gastroprotector, safeguarding the stomach lining, and exhibits hepatoprotective properties, thus supporting liver health.

In the urinary sphere, Pichi demonstrates notable anti-inflammatory properties, making it an effective treatment for urinary tract conditions. From a drainage perspective, it functions as a cholagogue, facilitating bile flow, and serves as a mild diuretic, promoting the elimination of excess fluids without harsh effects on the body.

At the neuroendocrine regulation level, Pichi plays a crucial role in thyroid function modulation. It acts centrally to inhibit the Thyrotropin-Releasing Hormone (TRH) more significantly than the Thyroid-Stimulating Hormone (TSH), providing a nuanced approach to managing thyroid activity. Additionally, it serves as a peripheral inhibitor, slowing down the conversion of T4 to T3. This dual action on thyroid regulation underscores Pichi's potential as a valuable herb in addressing thyroid-related disorders, offering a natural and integrative approach to treatment within the framework of Endobiogeny and the biology of functions.

MZ: How do you personalize phytotherapy treatments for your patients?

RBK: Personalizing phytotherapy treatments for my patients involves a comprehensive and strategic approach. Initially, it starts with a thorough patient interview, where I gather detailed information about their health history, lifestyle, and specific concerns. This is followed by a meticulous clinical

examination to assess their current health status. The process of diagnosis is critical; it involves identifying the positive diagnosis while also considering and ruling out differential diagnoses. When available, I incorporate functional biology analyses to gain deeper insights into the patient's unique physiological processes and imbalances. This holistic assessment allows me to craft a tailored treatment plan that not only addresses the patient's specific health issues but also considers their financial capabilities. By integrating these steps, I ensure that the phytotherapy treatment is not only effective and targeted but also accessible and sustainable for the patient, thereby enhancing the likelihood of successful outcomes and patient satisfaction.

MZ: What has been the most rewarding experience you've had with phytotherapy and Endobiogeny?

RBK: One of the most fulfilling experiences in my practice involved a 9-year-old girl who had to leave school due to severe guttate psoriasis. This condition not only affected her skin but also her psychological well-being, deeply impacting her social interactions and educational journey. After initiating a tailored treatment plan that integrated principles of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, we observed a remarkable transformation over a six-month period. The comprehensive approach, which addressed both her physical symptoms and underlying physiological imbalances, led to a significant improvement in her condition. She was able to return to school and continue her education as a middle school student, experiencing not just a recovery in her health but also a profound restoration of her confidence and social life. Witnessing her ability to reclaim a normal childhood and seeing her thrive academically and socially was incredibly gratifying. It underscored the profound impact that holistic and personalized medical care can have on a patient's life.

MZ: How do you see the relationship between diet, lifestyle, and phytotherapy in promoting health and well-being from the perspective of terrain medicine?

RBK: In the context of terrain medicine, the synergy between diet, lifestyle, and phytotherapy is fundamental to fostering optimal health and well-being. A lifestyle that harmonizes with our natural biological rhythms—such as sleeping in complete darkness and silence, distancing oneself from smartphones before bedtime, avoiding stimulants, waking with the sunrise, and engaging in regular physical activity—supports the coherent functioning of the autonomic nervous system and the endocrine system. This adherence to natural cycles, including the nycthemeral rhythm, ensures the orderly succession of hormonal secretions and neurotransmitter activity.

Furthermore, adequate hydration, sharing meals with family, thorough mastication of food, opting for organic and locally sourced produce, and maintaining healthy digestion are all practices that contribute to effective digestive emunctory drainage and a balanced gut microbiome, which is in harmony with the individual's biological terrain. These practices not only enhance the body's natural detoxification processes but also optimize the absorption and efficacy of phytotherapeutic treatments. By integrating these elements into a cohesive approach, we can significantly improve the body's resilience, promote healing, and prevent disease, thereby achieving a state of holistic health that aligns with the principles of terrain medicine.

MZ: What challenges do you foresee for the future of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, and

RBK: The primary challenge facing the future of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny lies in their integration into the global medical and pharmaceutical education systems. Despite the significant advancements and proven benefits of these disciplines, they remain largely marginalized in conventional medical curricula. To overcome this challenge, a multifaceted approach is required. Firstly, we must bolster the scientific evidence base for phytotherapy and Endobiogeny through rigorous research and clinical trials, demonstrating their efficacy and safety. This evidence can then be used to advocate for their inclusion in medical and pharmaceutical education. Additionally, building partnerships with academic institutions and

healthcare policymakers will be crucial in reforming curricula to include these holistic and integrative approaches. Engaging the medical community through seminars, workshops, and conferences can also raise awareness and foster acceptance. Ultimately, by showcasing the tangible benefits of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny for patient care, we can pave the way for their integration into mainstream healthcare education and practice, ensuring a more holistic and personalized approach to medicine worldwide.

MZ: How has your work in personalized medicine and Endobiogeny influenced your personal view of health and healing?

RBK: My experience with phytotherapy and Endobiogeny has profoundly reshaped my understanding of health and healing. I've come to realize that healing transcends mere symptom relief; it involves a dynamic and holistic process that must be contextualized within the specific temporal and spatial circumstances of each individual. Health is not a static state but a fluid condition that continuously evolves, influenced by a myriad of factors including environmental, genetic, and lifestyle elements. This perspective has led me to approach each patient's journey as unique, crafting treatments that not only address the symptoms but also harmonize with their overall life context, thereby promoting sustained well-being and vitality. This approach underscores the importance of viewing health as a personalized continuum rather than a series of isolated events.

MZ: What is the greatest lesson you have learned throughout your career in phytotherapy and Endobiogeny?

RBK: The most profound lesson my journey through phytotherapy and Endobiogeny has taught me is the importance of perpetual inquiry. Each answer to a question leads to another question, illustrating that there are solutions to every problem and explanations for every issue. This continuous cycle of questioning and understanding has not only deepened my knowledge but also reinforced the belief that the realms of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny are boundless. It underscores the

dynamic nature of healing and the complexity of the human body, encouraging a mindset of constant learning and adaptation. This approach has been instrumental in shaping my practice, allowing me to provide more nuanced and effective care to my patients.

MZ: What changes would you like to see in the perception and use of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny in the future?

RBK: Moving forward, I envision a healthcare landscape where the practice of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny is accessible to all patients, unimpeded by logistical barriers such as insurance reimbursement issues. I aspire for a future where these holistic approaches are fully integrated into mainstream healthcare, recognized and respected by allopathic physicians and pharmacists alike, without facing exclusion or skepticism. Additionally, I hope for a more robust supply chain that ensures the availability of necessary plants and pharmaceutical forms, eliminating the current challenges of prescription failures due to shortages. This would mark a significant step towards a more inclusive, effective, and patient-centered healthcare system that embraces the full spectrum of healing modalities.

MZ: Finally, what personal advice would you give me to continue evolving and enriching the field of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny?

RBK: The advancement of phytotherapy and Endobiogeny hinges on the dissemination and exchange of knowledge. It's through sharing insights and experiences that we can enhance our practice and deepen our understanding of these disciplines. My advice is to steadfastly believe in the power and potential of Endobiogeny. Do not be deterred by challenges or obstacles that may arise. Approach this field with patience and a willingness to persevere. Cultivate a passion for these practices, and never hesitate to seek clarification or delve deeper into complex concepts. Take advantage of opportunities to learn from experts in the field, engage actively in scientific conferences, and immerse yourself in the literature. Read and re-read scholarly articles and books to solidify your

knowledge and stay abreast of the latest developments. By embracing these practices with dedication and an open mind, you'll contribute significantly to the growth and sophistication of

phytotherapy and Endobiogeny, ensuring their valuable place in the future of holistic medicine. ✱

About the Interviewer

Dr. Manel Zghidi holds a doctorate of Pharmacy, from Faculty of Pharmacy, Monastir, Tunisia. She also holds a master's degree in phytotherapy and cosmetic marketing. She currently lives and works in Montreal, Canada. Her love of medicinal plants was instilled at an early age by her father, also a pharmacist. She has served as medical director of her family supplement company where she has brought endobiogenic thinking to product development. Her three great teachers in endobiogeny and medicinal plants are Dr. Durauffourd, Professor Chemli and Dr. Hedayat. Her goal is to continue their work in making endobiogeny accessible and applicable worldwide, for the benefit of mankind.