

Activity Report: “Integrative Travel Notebook”

Project Team

- **Olivia Brillard:** FMH physician in general internal medicine, associate physician at the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG)
 - **René Descartes:** FMH physician in general internal medicine, specializing in acupuncture (ASA) and homeopathy (SSMH)
 - **Mayssam Nehme:** FMH physician in general internal medicine, chief resident at HUG (Phase 1 of the project)
 - **Christophe Sauthier:** Osteopath, dipl. CDS/MFSO
 - **Jean-François Muller:** Patient partner
 - **Elena Lucciarini:** PhD candidate in Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching (University of East London), secondary school and HEP-VS teacher (Phase 2 of the project)
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Context

The long Covid consultation at the Geneva University Hospitals (HUG) has been providing care since November 2020 to over 700 patients suffering from persistent symptoms following a SARS-CoV-2 infection. In addition to the multidisciplinary medical care offered, many affected patients express a desire to access alternative and complementary medicine therapies, with some already consulting therapists on their own initiative.

The integrative medicine approach aims to combine conventional medical perspectives with non-scientifically recognized practices, provided that these have undergone research demonstrating at least their safety and a certain probability of efficacy. This integrative approach is widely supported by the population. In Switzerland, between 30% and 50% of people report having used alternative and complementary medicine, primarily homeopathy, phytotherapy, and acupuncture.

For this long Covid project, we sought to propose a coordinated integrative approach that not only offers a comprehensive assessment and care plan but also establishes coordination between physicians and therapists. This model can be summarized as follows:

1. **First evaluation:** A detailed, conventional, bio-psycho-social assessment that includes the metabolic dimension of the “health triad.”

2. **Second evaluation:** Based on complementary and alternative disciplines, which include:

- **Structural aspect**, particularly using the osteopathic model
 - **Energy medicine aspect**, particularly using the meridian model of acupuncture or homeopathy principles
 - **Informational or “Mind-Body” aspect**, which may include approaches such as EMDR or hypnosis
3. **Third stage:** A teamwork phase to achieve a comprehensive and consensus-based understanding of the patient, enabling the development of a true integrative diagnosis and the co-construction of a treatment plan with the patient.
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Project Objectives

1. **Developing an interdisciplinary and patient-partnered model** of coordinated integrative care that includes:

- An “integrative analysis guide” structured around semi-structured interviews from various disciplines involved in patient care (which later became the *Carnet de Voyage*).
- A structured care process enabling coordinated and harmonious implementation of different assessments, with patient involvement.

2. **Validation** by 1 to 3 consulting patients outside the working group.

3. **Validation of the model by a panel of experts** (sounding board).

4. **Pilot phase implementation:**

- Identification and training of 3 therapists in the integrative analysis guide and care process.
- Management of 5 patients suffering from long Covid, including integrative assessments, synthesis, and patient feedback, followed by 4 months of integrative therapeutic care.

5. **Evaluation of integrative care** from both the therapists’ and patients’ perspectives.

Actions Taken

Creation and Validation of the Carnet de Voyage (Objectives 1 to 3)

In December 2021, the Leenaards Foundation granted funding for this project based on the objectives mentioned above.

The first step was to create the *Integrative Analysis Guide*. The working group met for approximately 20 hours throughout 2022 to develop what would eventually become the *Carnet de Voyage*. Initially conceived as an integrative anamnesis, it evolved into a comprehensive self-evaluation tool fostering partnerships between patients and healthcare professionals. It was designed to establish links between one's life and health while also being visually engaging.

By February 2023, the first PDF version of the *Carnet de Voyage* was deemed sufficiently complete by the working group for preliminary use and validation.

A first presentation was conducted with patients from the working group members to gather initial field feedback. In April 2023, a printed version of the *Carnet de Voyage* was introduced to the Free Jazz community, accompanied by an online feedback questionnaire. Finally, the *Carnet de Voyage* was presented to a small expert group from HUG, including heads of the Patient Therapeutic Education Center and the Integrative Medicine Center.

As none of the feedback questioned the content of the *Carnet de Voyage*, the working group decided that, for practical reasons, the pilot phase with patients would proceed using this first version, with all comments documented for post-pilot revisions.

Pilot Phase with Patients

By June 2023, the integrative coordination process had been refined. The therapists involved in the working group were selected as experts in the following axes:

- **Structural:** Christophe Sauthier
- **Energy-based:** René Descartes
- **Informational (Positive Psychology):** Elena Lucciarini

Patients were recruited directly by Olivia Braillard and Mayssam Nehme through their consultations. They exchanged their patients for the medical evaluation interview. Additionally, one patient outside of the HUG long Covid consultation joined the participants.

Meanwhile, ethical approval was obtained from the Research Ethics Commission for this project, categorized as a “quality project.”

Preparation for the Coordination Day:

- About **two weeks before the coordination day**, each participant received their *Carnet de Voyage* at home to complete, along with the project’s consent form.
- About **one week before the coordination day**, medical interviews (one hour each) were conducted, and the consent forms were signed.

On **August 25**, the coordination day took place at the Primary Care Medicine Service at HUG.

- **Morning session:** Each of the 5 participants met individually with the 3 therapists (45 minutes per interview).
- **Midday and early afternoon:** Physicians and therapists shared their assessments and established an integrative diagnosis.
- **Afternoon session:** Individual feedback sessions were conducted via Teams to avoid making participants wait on-site, as they were already fatigued from the morning consultations.

An **online questionnaire** was administered to evaluate the first phase (the *Carnet de Voyage* and the coordination day).

A second evaluation was initially planned for **March 2024** after the four-month integrative care period. However, as not all participants had completed their treatment, this evaluation was postponed to **April 2024**.