

The field: the virtual reality of constellations and other integrative and complementary therapies

O campo: a realidade virtual das constelações e outras terapias integrativas e complementares

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ABSTRACT

What happens during the constellations that allows the representative to access information from a family system, which is unknown to the representative and sometimes even to the family members? Is there an informed field from which the information is accessed? What are morphogenetic fields? Can they explain what happens during the constellations? Are there other ways to interpret what happens during constellations? Can the effects of constellations be measured? These questions are answered in this review, including the orthodox and unorthodox concepts of the field. It is important to highlight that all integrative practices access and affect the biofield of human beings, leading them to self-organization. The family constellation, recognized in 2018 as one of these integrative and complementary therapies offered by the Brazilian Unified Health System (SUS), accesses not only the biofield of human beings, but also the informed field of the familiar system.

Keywords: Alternative therapies, Family therapy, Holistic health, Integrative and complementary therapies.

RESUMO

O que acontece durante as constelações que permite ao representante acessar informações de um sistema familiar desconhecido, até mesmo dos familiares? Existe um campo informado a partir do qual as informações são acessadas? O que são campos morfogenéticos? Eles podem explicar o que acontece durante as constelações? Há outras maneiras de interpretar o que acontece durante as constelações? Os efeitos das constelações podem ser mensurados? Essas perguntas são respondidas nesta revisão, incluindo os conceitos ortodoxos e não ortodoxos do campo. É importante destacar que todas as práticas integrativas acessam e afetam o biocampo do ser humano, levando-o à auto-organização. A constelação familiar, reconhecida em 2018 como uma dessas terapias integrativas e complementares oferecida pelo Sistema Único de Saúde (SUS) brasileiro, acessa não somente o biocampo do ser humano, mas também o campo informado do sistema familiar.

Palavras-chave: Saúde holística, Terapias alternativas, Terapias integrativas e complementares, Terapia familiar.

1 INTRODUCTION

With the implementation of information technology at the end of the 1970s, and with the interconnection of computers in a network, at the end of the 1980s, society went from industrial to the informational or globalized society (AFONSO, 2002). This network allows us to access libraries, books, journals, articles, locations, people, the past, the present and predictions for the future in a matter of seconds. In the academic field, publications such as the Biological Abstract, an important database published on paper and containing abstracts of articles published in specific journals in the area around the world, fell into disuse and were replaced by virtual search engine sites such as Bioline International, Directory of Open Access Journals, ERIC, Google Scholar, HighBeam Research, JStor, Online Journals Search Engine, Portal da CAPES, Redalyc, SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), ScienceResearch, SpringerLink, Web of Science, among others.

In 1994 the Internet entered the lives of Brazilians (LINS, 2013), and today it is the environment of virtual relationships and exchange of information and services, widespread and practically unrestricted for all areas of knowledge and activities. In 2015, the GSM Association estimated that 73% of the world's population would be in possession of 3G technology and predicted that this number would rise to 80% in 2020, with 60% enjoying 4G coverage (ITU, 2015). In 2020, the current number of mobile phone users is 4.78 billion, that is, 61.51% of the people in the world are using a cell phone (TURNER, 2020). Currently the amount of information present in the informational cloud represents the history of humanity and can be accessed from anywhere, in any language, for any purpose. This database is fed every minute, virtually unrestricted.

This technological advance facilitates the understanding of the concepts and functioning of the informed field (LASZLO, 2008), Higgs field (WITZE, 2012) or zero-point field (McTAGGART, 2008), until then restricted to some subareas of Physics such as Quantum Mechanics, Elementary Particle Physics and Fields, being approached by few researchers. For these few authors and researchers, there is no empty space, because it is full of information that can be accessed according to the frequency used, in the same way that a radio or television station is accessed, that is, there is an intricate network of information available to all (see review presented by RANAL, 2017), and that constitutes the cosmic web. As Ranal (2017) wrote, admitting the existence of the zero-point field is to recognize a field that resonates in the systems, an authentic database of humanity.

The zero-point field is a reservoir of information, dynamically fed and modified, and is accessed not only in the constellation work, but in all integrative practices and mental works that encompass the emotional and intellectual activities of humanity. This access does not depend on physical devices such as cell phones and computers. From this field, insights are accessed in all areas of knowledge, producing the new knowledge. It is also from that field that these integrative healing processes come. This is the virtual reality of the familiar, organizational and structural constellations and of all human activity, because each human is an antenna receiving and emitting information.

But what are constellations? Family, organizational and structural constellations constitute types of systemic therapy, as it affects groups, even if only one of their members is treated. According to Franke-Bryson (2013), the support of systemic thinking dates back to the therapeutic work of Virginia Satir, a psychotherapist and one of the founders of family therapy, called family sculpture; to the psychodrama work of Jacob Moreno, graduated in medicine and psychiatry, and his psychotherapeutic applications; and the relationship therapy work of Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy, whose greatest contribution was scientific research and the description of systemic entanglements, caused by invisible loyalties. This set of ideas served as the basis for what is known as a family constellation (HELLINGER; HÖVEL, 2007; HELLINGER, 2012 a,b; SCHNEIDER, 2013). Its unfolding and adaptation to broader and diverse social systems such as companies and institutions, was carried out by Weber (ECHEGARAY, 2015). A new modality called structural constellation, was conceived by Matthias Varga von Kibéd and Insa Sparrer (SPARRER, 2012).

As the creator of family constellations was not concerned with scientifically explaining how the process occurs (HELLINGER; HÖVEL, 2007), his followers eventually did the same. Thus, the largest volume of information about the theory and practice of constellations is in books (translated into several languages) that emphasize the description of constellations that were carried out in workshops (HELLINGER, 2007, 2012a, 2013, 2014 among others).

2 AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT FIELD

The concept of field is a fundamental notion of Physics, which was consolidated throughout the 19th century (ROCHA, 2009). Initially, the notion of field was associated with the presence of physical matter, but conflicted when studies on the propagation of light began. This luminous phenomenon could be explained from the concepts of the field

of mechanical oscillations in elastic solids, but for this it would be necessary to admit the existence of some type of material in the apparently empty space (ROCHA, 2009).

The review presented by Ranal (2017) brings some important authors who deal with the subject, not in the conventional way, known by orthodox Physics, but from the perspective of the broader phenomena, including psychics, and an interconnected cosmic network that affects systems. Among these authors, it is possible to highlight Lakhovsky (1951), Sheldrake (1995, 1997, 2013, 2014), Lipton (2007), Laszlo (2008), McTaggart (2008), Radin (2008), Movaffaghi; Farsi (2009) and Citro (2014) who bring with them important theories and concepts of Quantum Physics, of the multidimensionality of being and of the cosmic intertwining.

Although science is still moving towards a complete understanding of fields, the electromagnetic field may probably be the means by which information circulates in the Universe (RANAL, 2017). Each particle in the Universe generates an electromagnetic field around it, which interpolates with that of its neighbours, forming a communications network. What happens to a particle is detected by the set that reacts and generates more information within an uninterrupted dynamism.

3 MORPHOGENETIC FIELDS AND CONSTELLATIONS

Rupert Sheldrake, as a biologist, focuses his attention on understanding the morphological and behavioural patterns that are repeated in nature (SHELDRAKE, 1997). Because of this, Bert Hellinger's followers associate his name as the basis for understanding the process that is perceived during family or systemic constellations, even if Hellinger himself had not expressed interest in the scientific aspect of his work (HELLINGER; HÖVEL, 2007).

Sheldrake (1995, 1997, 2013, 2014) was the major disseminator of the existence of fields that interfere with organisms, either from a morphological or behavioural point of view. He tirelessly insists that morphology and behaviour generate fields that generate habits and everything is repeated by morphic resonance. His ideas go beyond the Mendelian (genetic), Lamarckian (transmission of characters acquired by repetition of something important and significant for the species) and epigenetic (external influences, generated by attractors, limiting factors and others), because the evolutionary paths, in his opinion, are repeated by the formation of habits that generate memory and this memory, in constellations, manifests itself in what professionals in the area call systemic loyalty. In other words, everyone wants to be with their flock because it protects them.

All wish to belong (law of belonging to the constellations) and to be accepted, and therefore act in a similar way to the flock (systemic loyalty). For Sheldrake, the more an evolutionary path repeats, the greater the chance of it being fixed in the group's memory.

The morphogenesis (morphological sequence of development) that is expressed in living beings is the result of gene activation, triggered by environmental factors that act from the formation of gametes to the complete form of the embryo or foetus, but also the activation of memory that is transferred to the offspring by repetition of what was important for the survival of the species (LIPTON, 2007). It is important to highlight that morphogenesis is the manifestation of the morphic field that is contained in the zero-point field that permeates everything and where the Universe records its history as specific vibratory frequencies. The transmission, by resonance, of this memory stored in the field seems to be the most reasonable and coherent hypothesis to explain what happens during constellations, and this is the most widely accepted and disseminated idea among constellators.

4 ANOTHER WAY TO INTERPRET WHAT HAPPENS DURING CONSTELLATIONS

Sheldrake was convinced of the existence of a field that keeps all the morphology and behaviour possible to express itself on Earth under control and that it is self-regenerating. Although his ideas are well consolidated and vastly illustrated with examples of nature (SHELDRAKE, 1997), it is necessary to move forward, starting with other interpretations that can be added to those. The questions that remain open, within this context of the constellations, are associated with access to information that was unknown even to family members. During the constellations, does a portal open? Is each representative of the constellation a portal? Are we all interconnected and so accessing the same information, regardless of personal memory of events experienced? Are we antennas capable of accessing the information contained in the field?

To understand matter and its continued evolution, we need, as Laszlo (2008) reminds us, to recognize the presence of a factor that is neither matter nor energy, but one decisive information for the creation of the Universe and its evolution. For the author, information is an inherent aspect of the physical and biological nature of all bodies and extends far beyond the mind.

From what we know so far, information is a record that can materialize physically (matter) or as waves (energy), but as the Universe is creative, surely there must be

information (in-formation) that does not manifest, and Laszlo leaves this idea imprinted in his work. If all that permeates us is informed field, what is then information? Citro (2014) answers. Information is energy being transmitted in electromagnetic waves, propagating variations in the field. Is this information an awareness that is the guiding principle of everything? Is consciousness a form of energy?

The in-formation, the spelling that Laszlo prefers to give to this term because it generates forms, is a subtle, almost instantaneous, non-evanescent and non-energetic connection between things in different places of space and events at different moments of time (LASZLO, 2008). These are the non-local connections of natural and transpersonal sciences in consciousness research. In-formation binds things, whether subatomic particles or galaxies, as well as minds and consciousnesses, regardless of the distance between them and how long ago the first connection happened (LASZLO, 2008).

The connections between atomic particles and the bodies of the macrocosm are relationships that extend across space and time and have been predicted by quantum theory since their inception, when Einstein still did not accept them scientifically and called them ghostly actions at a distance (RADIN, 2008).

Erwin Schrödinger, author of the book "What is life", was one of the founders of quantum theory and called these relationships intertwining or entanglement (connection between separate particles that persist, despite the distance, provided they came into contact only once), stating that this is the most characteristic trait of quantum mechanics (SCHRÖDINGER, 1997). What many physicists have believed until recently is that this intertwining could occur at the atomic level, for abstract theoretical reasons, only as a temporary and very ephemeral state, without practical consequences for the physical world. However, it has been experimentally demonstrated that the intertwined connections rise the scale of magnitude to the macroscopic bodies and persist over many kilometres. Some scientists believe that the coherence of living systems depends on this intertwining and that perhaps the Universe is a single object, fully intertwined with itself. Radin (2008) states that this explains communication of sensations, emotions and actions at a distance and opens a new way of thinking about psychic phenomena, as these seem to be a consequence of this interconnected and intertwined reality. The author recalls that the idea of the Universe as an interconnected whole is millenary among Eastern philosophies, but only at the beginning of the 20th century did Western science begin to assess that this ancient view could be correct.

Cosmologists working with mathematical models of black holes are surprised to discover that the entire Universe can be described as a type of hologram, with patterns of interference in space and time. According to Radin (2008), in *The Weirdest Link*, a paper published by Michael Brooks in the *New Scientist* in March 27 2004 on intertwining, Brooks suggests that many physicists now believe that the intertwining between particles exists everywhere, all the time, and this affects the macroscopic world we inhabit. Brooks affirmed that the entanglement could even be the key to understanding what gives rise to the phenomenon of life.

This reinforces and at the same time expands Sheldrake's theory of morphic fields, as it is not necessary to think of minimal critical mass and continued repetition for a habit (form or behaviour) to create and conserve a new field, as Sheldrake has insisted in his work. The entire Manifest Universe (matter and energy) was created from the same point and this generated the connection of everything with everything in the first Big Bang. Everything vibrates in the same intertwining and collects new vibrations as it expands. It is worth recalling the words of Laszlo (2008), according to which the explosions that create Multiverses are recurring bangs, instabilities in the Metaverse vacuum that keep the set dynamically informed. Thus, it can be said that the morphic fields are not the primary cause that explain the maintenance of organic and inorganic systems, but rather the first contact between particles at the time of creation. The intertwining that is maintained through space and time, ensures that this whole set is with the same information, renewed at every moment. Each vibration differentiated in this field informed by intertwining generates more information, incessantly and eternally. We are all immersed in a gigantic informed field and we collect information continuously from it, because we are intertwined with everything in it. As this field has a lot of information, to access something specific, it is necessary to enter its frequency, and for this you just need to think about what you want to access. This explains similar insights among researchers, even if they are working in distinct and distant laboratories. It is worth reproducing the famous phrase of Sir James Jeans, British Physicist, Astronomer and Mathematician, quoted by Radin (2008) "The Universe is beginning to look like a great thought rather than a great machine." and that throws us away from mechanicism.

Due to this previous approach, the systemic constellation can be considered the physical and emotional manifestation of the energetic relations recorded in the informational network of one or more interconnected systems, whether family, business, groups, villages, cities, states, countries or even the Planet, by the simple mention of the

system. Mentioning the system name, individual or collective, is like accessing an internet link. The page opens and you browse where you can and where you see meaning.

5 EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF CONSTELLATION THERAPY

In addition to the difficulty in explaining what happens during constellations and how information is accessed by representatives, this therapy needs to have its validity measured using the current scientific method. I believe that with the approach presented above the first two questions (field concept and access of information) are elucidated. What is lacking is the scientific evidence of the effects of constellations on the process of systemic healing.

In general, constellations are only a descriptive phenomenon and the descriptions associated with some theory about this type of therapy are included in books (HELLINGER, 2007, 2012a, 2013, 2014 among others) or in some theoretical papers (STIEFEL et al., 2002; COHEN, 2006; SALTERS, 2013; McQUILLIN; WELFORD, 2014). Some papers describe cases treated in workshops (GÓMEZ GÓMEZ; PÉREZ DOÑORO, 2005; DUNCAN, 2017).

Some qualitative effects of this therapy began to be published. One pioneer work made in South Africa to evaluate the behaviour of different cultural groups during constellation workshops was done by Mayer; Viviers (2015). The authors selected six facilitators of the first generation trained and graduated in 2006 in South Africa and actively working with constellation work in that country. Eight constellation workshops were made from 2011 to 2013 to collect information about the influence of the multicultural and post-apartheid South Africa on constellation works. The authors collected theoretical and practical recommendations for therapy practitioners working with systemic interventions like constellation work.

Interesting and successful case reports are emerging in the educational field, with psychopedagogy mixed with exercises of the family constellation. Children with learning disabilities can benefit when it is discovered that some of the systemic laws are neglected, creating imbalances, often generated by systemic entanglements (BRAGA, 2009).

The efficacy of family constellation seminars was evaluated by Hunger et al. (2014) based on one sample of 208 adults who were randomly allocated either to the intervention group or to the wait-list group. It appears that this was the first quantitative work involving family constellations. Both groups had 64 active participants and 40 observing participants. The active participants had some issue to solve and the observing

participants did not. The event occurred during three days, and evaluations were done twice. Once after two weeks and another after four months, both of them using the Experience in Social Systems Questionnaire, personal domain (EXIS.pers) and the interpersonal scales derived from established measurements (Outcome Questionnaire, OQ-45; Tool for the Evaluation of the Psychotherapeutic Progress, FEP). The average person in the intervention group showed improved experience in personal social systems, as compared with approximately 73% of the wait-list group after two weeks and 69% of the wait-list group after four months. The results were confirmed in per-protocol analyses by the results of the EXIS.pers dimensions (Belonging, Autonomy, Accord, and Confidence) and the interpersonal scales derived from the OQ-45 and FEP. According to the authors, this was a pioneer project because this is the first randomized controlled trial examining the absolute efficacy of the family constellation seminars on individuals' experiences in their personal social systems. In general, publications pointed out the international importance of the family constellation workshops or seminars but only for counselling and psychotherapy. They comment that the lack of research in family constellations may stem from the absence of a psychometrically sound instrument and, perhaps, because of this, the Hunger team developed the EXIS Questionnaire used in their projects. In the words of the authors, the results demonstrated a clear improvement in the personal social systems of the intervention group, for both active and observing participants.

Another focus for the same sample of people showed that the family constellation seminars improved the psychological functioning, evaluated by the Outcome Questionnaire OQ-45.2 at the 2-week and 4-month follow-ups, and also the psychological distress and motivational incongruence of the intervention group had sustainable effects (WEINHOLD et al., 2013).

The mid- and long-term stability of the effects of family constellation seminars were evaluated in a sample of 104 adults (HUNGER et al., 2015) who were part of the intervention group studied by Weinhold et al. (2013) and Hunger et al. (2014). Hunger et al. (2015) observed that the improved psychological functioning persisted at 8 and 12 months after the events as well as the psychological distress, motivational incongruence, individuals' experience in their personal social systems and overall goal attainment.

A quantitative study in constellations was also done by Carvalho et al. (2019) with the aim to evaluate the quality of life of postgraduate students. One of the main differences between the family and structural constellations is that the former focuses its

attention on systemic problems and their causes and the second focuses its attention on solving problems, without having to know the causes that originated them. As the structural is a more objective type of constellation that ends up protecting the client, since the therapist does not need to know his past history, the technique of the nine squares of the structural constellation was chosen by Carvalho et al. (2019) to test the hypotheses that postgraduate students do not have difficulties to be evaluated (null hypothesis) and that these students have difficulties to be evaluated (alternative hypothesis). The nine squares technique was described by Sparrer (2012) and is adequate to analyse different contexts of life that are tangled or overlapping. By bringing at its core the principles of mathematical logic, the technique helps the person to organize the different aspects of their life, treating each problem appropriately, in its own time and place.

For the development of this work, a convenient, purposive and voluntary nonprobability sample of 36 students of a Postgraduate Program was used, half of which were maintained as a control group (an option made by the students) and the other half submitted to the technique of the nine squares of the structural constellation. The hypotheses were tested by the WHOQOL-BREF questionnaire at the beginning and at the end of the semester. At the beginning of the semester, the two groups evaluated presented the same quality of life profile, but at the end of the semester the group that was treated by the constellation increased their comfort during the evaluations and improved their quality of life in terms of psychological and environmental domains. Another important aspect was the positive correlation between the expectation of greater comfort during the evaluations and the social domain, before constellation, and with the psychological domain after the constellation. Carvalho et al. (2019) concluded that if the quality of life of the group that participated in the constellation was improved, this type of therapy can help students to look at the evaluation process with more self-confidence, improving their academic performance.

These works in the constellations, using the scientific method to prove the effects of this type of therapy should serve as a stimulus for other therapists to disseminate their work, validating it scientifically.

6 INTEGRATIVE PRACTICES IN THE BRAZILIAN UNIFIED HEALTH SYSTEM (SUS)

In 2006, the Ministry of Health approved the National Policy of Integrative and Complementary Health Practices (PNPIC), through Ordinance GM/MS No. 971 of May

3, 2006 (BRASIL, 2006). In the beginning, only five procedures were offered to the public by the Unified Health System (SUS). In 2017, 14 activities were incorporated into the system, totalling 19 integrative practices available by the SUS. In March 2018, during the opening of the 1st International Congress of Integrative and Complementary Practices and Public Health, promoted by the Ministry of Health, it was announced that Brazil would have 29 integrative practices, among them, the family constellations. The approval was made official by Ordinance No. 702 of March 21, 2018 (BRASIL, 2018). These practices, recognized by the World Health Organization, represent an investment in health prevention, and Brazil is leading in the offer of this modality of primary care to human health. This and other information are available on the Ministry of Health website (BRASIL, 2020).

The indication of this complementary treatment by the SUS occurs in the scope of Primary Care, in the Basic Health Units (UBS) and also in specialized care, in hospital units and specialized centres. The number of health units operating in this line increased from 22,164 in 2017 to 25,197 in 2018 and are present in 78% of Brazilian municipalities (BRASIL, 2020). According to this site, between 2017 and 2018, the number of people treated individual and/or collectively by SUS with these therapies went from 157,000 to 355,000. The sectors responsible for these treatments have shown the benefits of the integration between conventional medicine and integrative practices and, to meet the demand, the number of trained professionals has increased in recent years (BRASIL, 2020).

Agents of the Ministry of Health conceptualize family constellations as a psychotherapeutic method of systemic, energetic and phenomenological approach, which seeks to recognize the origin of the problems and/or alterations brought about by the user, as well as what is covered up in family relationships. Through the knowledge of the forces that act in the family unconscious and the laws of the human relationship, it is possible to find order, belonging and balance, creating conditions for the person to reorient themselves towards healing (BRASIL, 2020). With this recognition and official approval, the family constellations now occupy a prominent place in Brazilian public health and can minimize, among others, depression problems that affect students of health courses such as those pointed out by Brito et al. (2021).

7 FINAL CONSIDERATION

The field is the backdrop where all things happen, and it is also what surrounds all living beings. As was well defined by the biophysics Rubik (2002), the biofield is the extremely weak electromagnetic field, where the electromagnetic bioinformation for the homeodynamic regulation of the living organisms is. According to this author, this explains the continued exchange of energy (information at multiple levels of organization which allows self-regulation) between the living beings and the environment. This term was approved by the National Institute of Health in 1994 and was subsequently accepted by the US National Library of Medicine as a bioelectromagnetic and biophysical field that participates in the regulation of cell structure and function (MOVAFAGHI; FARSI, 2009). The proof of the existence of this biofield around the plants was made with the papers gathered in the book organized by Ranal; Amorim (2017). It is important to highlight that all integrative practices access and affect the biofield of human beings, leading them to self-organization.

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