

A Proposal for a Lymphatic Manifesto

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While the lymphatic system is one of the 12-14 systems in the body, it receives almost no attention from the medical profession nor from basic scientists. In textbooks of Medicine, Surgery, Pathology or Anatomy, it rarely occupies more than one half percent of space.

While this may improve with time and the efforts of people such as ourselves, the fact remains that many millions of people will suffer because of this widespread ignorance. Some will lose their lives, some will lose their limbs; many will suffer needless pain and incapacity; many research workers will get incorrect results. All of this through simple ignorance of the importance of the lymphatics.

I believe it is within our power to significantly reduce these numbers; it is certainly within our power to try.

I propose that the Society should authorize the publishing of a “Lymphatic Manifesto”. This perhaps seems rather excessive, but I think the ignorance of the importance of this [lymphatic] system warrants it. No other system is so neglected and we are its only organized champions!

I envisage a short (½ page) “letter” or article which lists the outstanding facts about the system. E.g. “if all lymphatics in a limb are suddenly obstructed, the animal dies within 2-3 weeks”; “lymphedema is very disabling and can be treated”; “if the lymphatics are obstructed, in a preparation for the study of blood vascular Starling pressures, the results show serious error”; etc.

This “manifest” should be sent to every major medical and scientific journal in the world.