

# Vienna Circle: Where Internationals Meet

## *International healing at Integrative Medicine*

by **Nina Cranen** on May 1, 2013

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At the Centre of Integrative Medicine, 13 experts treat the mind, body and spirit – all at the same time. What sounds like hocus-pocus is offered as a more human, and humane, approach to healing. Doctors and therapists practice a holistic approach of treating the person, not just the disease.

“We find the source of the pain you are having by looking at your posture, your breathing and the troubled body part,” explains Dr. Günther Malek, founder and treating physician at the centre. “Then we choose the treatment that suits you.” Founded in 2008 with his wife Kathrin Malek, the - Centre of Integrative Medicine Schwindgasse in the 4th District combines conventional Western medicine with complementary therapies such as osteopathy and acupuncture. All the centre’s doctors and therapists speak English – a blessing for Vienna’s English-speaking newcomers – and about 20 per cent of the centre’s patients are internationals.

### **Treating the person**

Sometimes the search requires a bit of background. “If you have the flu,” Dr. Malek said, “we won’t discuss your childhood or the amount of pressure you are under, but sometimes we get stuck in the healing process, and then we have to dig deeper.” Doctors are used to getting information, not giving it away. He hesitated before answering the question as to why integrative medicine remains under such strong criticism even though these complementary therapies have been proven to be scientifically valid. Finally, Dr. Malek sighed. “‘Integrative medicine’ is often confused with ‘alternative medicine’... which has a bad image, as the term covers a wide range of healing methods, some practiced by certified therapists, but unfortunately also by charlatans.”



“We look at patients as a whole person, not as a number” | Photo: Integrative Medicine

### **Keeping it real**

The centre combines classical medicine with other useful therapies on an ad hoc basis to complement it. “So saying it is esoteric, or a placebo, does not make sense.” Many American expats are surprised that chiropractors, for example, are frowned upon in Europe, and may not prescribe drugs.

“I do prescribe painkillers and antibiotics,” Dr. Malek stressed. “We treat with sense; and things that make sense are useful.” Here, the centre thrives on trust: “Mostly our clients are referred to us

by family members, colleagues, or friends.” While the centre is private, Krankenkasse (public insurance) patients are still partially covered. Without insurance, consultations cost between €80 and €180 and treatment prices range from €70 to €120. Foreigners insured at home can usually get the fees reimbursed from abroad. And not being contractually bound by health funds, the staff can take as much time as they need to.

“I also think people come to us because they want to be understood,” Dr. Malek conceded. “We look at them as a whole-person and not as number.”

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