

Theranostics, Theragnostics, or Iama-gnostics?

Many reputable medical journals, including The Lancet and the BMJ, have adopted the term “*Theranostics*”. Under the alternative term “*Theragnostics*”, PubMed currently registers 1207 articles. Both terms encountered by the reader for the first time are puzzling and largely meaningless, if not confusing.

According to Idee et al. (2013), the concept of “*Theranostics*” was coined in 1998 in the USA by John Funkhouser, to describe a material that allows the combined diagnosis, treatment and follow up of a disease [1, 2].

Presumably the word was invented by truncating therapeutics to *thera* and diagnostics to *nostics* joining the two into *Theranostics*.

But in Greek “*thera*” relates to hunting of wild beasts, the chase. Metaphorically, it may also mean “the eager pursuit of anything”. Although chasing cancer by any means remains a justifiable and desirable pursuit, *Theranostics* does not exactly reflect the meaning intended by the originator.

Iama (in Greek, ἰαμα or ἰημα) also refers to therapy but

more importantly and specifically also, to means of therapy.

May I, therefore, propose that a more meaningful term encompassing both therapy and diagnosis served by the same material, could be *iama-gnostics*?

Considering the Anglo-Saxon compulsion for precise terminology and for laconic exactitude, could *iama-gnostics* find its place in the medical literature?

Bibliography

1. Idee JM, Louquet S, Ballet S, Corot C. Theranostics and contrast-agents for medical imaging: a pharmaceutical company viewpoint. *Quant Imaging Med Surg* 2013; 3(6): 292-7.
2. Kelkar SS, Reineke TM. Theranostics: combining imaging and therapy. *Bioconjug Chem* 2011; 22(10): 1879-903.

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