

The Load-Clearance-Throughput Model of Chronic Illness

Absurd Health Institute · Medical Concept Papers, Volume Three · Third editorial pass, 17 October 2026

Article type: Mechanistic research perspective · **Status:** Conceptual argument, not clinical guideline

Chronic illness may reflect a mismatch between incoming load and processing capacity. A useful version of the load-clearance-throughput model begins with measurable substances and processes, not the undifferentiated word “toxins.” Every organ handles particular inputs, performs transformation or sequestration, and exports products through defined routes. A bottleneck can develop when a rate of production or exposure exceeds what the relevant pathway can process. The Institute's thesis is that some persistent syndromes may involve mismatches of input and handling capacity that are invisible when only one blood concentration is considered.

Examples include accumulation of specific metabolites in advanced kidney disease or bilirubin under certain hepatobiliary disturbances. These are established, disease-specific phenomena, not proof that every chronic symptom is caused by impaired “detoxification.” The theory has to name the material, identify where it comes from, determine its route of handling, and show how accumulation plausibly affects a tissue. Without that chain, load and throughput remain evocative vocabulary.

Modeling the rate, not just the stock. A candidate model begins with an input rate, a conversion rate, a distribution volume, and an elimination rate. It predicts that the same circulating concentration could conceal different fluxes, while a transient rise could occur from greater production despite intact clearance. Repeated measures or tracer methods may distinguish the hypotheses more effectively than an isolated blood test. Clinical outcomes should be linked to the identified substance at concentrations actually observed in the patient.

The strongest challenge to conventional assessment concerns the relationship between normal-range markers and physiological reserve. A patient can maintain a circulating concentration through compensation until capacity is exceeded. But the result is not permission to prescribe unspecific cleanses, binders, or restrictive diets. It is a framework for asking which molecule or pathway is constrained and whether an intervention improves both its kinetics and meaningful function. That is the condition under which throughput becomes a causal medical explanation rather than a metaphor.

A load model needs a named molecule and a named exit route. The word “load” conceals more than it explains unless the investigator specifies the incoming material and the physiological pathway handling it. Urea, bilirubin and particular xenobiotics have different production, transformation and excretion processes. A framework that treats them all as one undifferentiated toxic burden cannot generate valid clinical predictions. The Institute should instead develop a mass-balance model for a named substance, identify plausible concentrations and assay limitations, and link those concentrations to a measured clinical effect.

An intervention that changes plasma concentration may have altered generation, volume of distribution or clearance. Comparing production and excretion can distinguish the possibilities. The controversial implication is that a normal circulating stock might sometimes hide abnormal flux or reduced reserve, but that should be demonstrated with repeated or kinetic measures. The paper must be precise enough that a failed prediction would count against the chosen bottleneck, rather than being blamed on a different invisible toxin.

The falsification condition for a throughput explanation. If the candidate substance's production, transformation and excretion are within expected physiological bounds while symptoms persist, the specific load-clearance account loses plausibility. The investigator must not respond by naming a new invisible toxin without evidence. The model can be tested through repeated kinetic measurements, relevant organ function and identified exposures, with controls for distribution and binding changes. A successful argument would show that changing the demonstrated bottleneck predicts a clinically meaningful benefit. This is the difference between physiology and a self-sealing account of purification: one has a measurable material and an expected route; the other explains every symptom retrospectively.

Two people can have the same concentration and different fluxes. A snapshot of a circulating substance does not necessarily reveal the rate at which the body produces or removes it. High production coupled with high excretion can yield a similar concentration to low production coupled with low excretion. For a named metabolite, repeated kinetic measures can distinguish these states and reveal different physiological constraints. The model must identify the relevant molecule and a known pathway; otherwise throughput becomes a synonym for unexplained illness.

A convincing test would show that the proposed kinetic abnormality precedes or predicts a clinical outcome and that altering the identified bottleneck changes that outcome. If no plausible concentration–effect relation is found, the claim of toxic load should be reconsidered. This approach makes a challenge to concentration-only reasoning without dispensing with conventional measurement or chemistry.

Normal concentration can coexist with abnormal production or clearance. The same circulating level can arise from different combinations of production, distribution and excretion. A model focused on throughput must identify which component is changed and demonstrate it with appropriate kinetic measurements, not infer it from fatigue or other nonspecific symptoms. Specific metabolites can provide tractable examples; the result must not be generalized to a vague bodily toxin burden. A compelling study would show that a measurable rate limitation predicts a clinical effect and that correcting the rate changes the outcome. If the fluxes are normal, the proposed explanation should lose plausibility. This is how the Institute can challenge concentration-centered thinking without abandoning chemical specificity.

Detailed considerations from the original investigation

The source manuscript proposes that health depends partly on the balance among incoming exposure, internal production, storage, biotransformation and elimination. This general mass-balance logic is real in toxicology and physiology; the novel claim is that an analogous model could explain selected chronic multisystem syndromes. The critical step is chemical specificity. “Load” is not a single substance, and “clearance” is not one organ function that can be inferred from nonspecific symptoms.

A substance may enter through food, inhalation, medication or endogenous production; distribute into plasma and tissues; undergo enzymatic metabolism; cycle through bile and intestine; leave through urine, feces or other routes. Exposure and clearance dynamics differ enormously across water-soluble metabolites, lipophilic pollutants, endogenous hormones, heavy metals and living pathogens. For lipophilic persistent pollutants, adipose partitioning and long half-lives can matter. For sodium or glucose, controlled homeostatic networks dominate. A mass-balance model becomes useful when each analyte, compartment and rate constant is defined rather than represented by an undifferentiated “toxin burden.”

A persistent organic pollutant, a steroid metabolite, uric acid and a live parasite do not share a single clearance pathway. A useful load-and-throughput model must specify the actual substance and its compartments. ‘Clearing the terrain’ is evocative language, but without chemical specificity it can inadvertently imply that medically unrelated problems have the same underlying mechanism.

The manuscript sometimes speaks as though accumulation dominates chronic disease generally. That stronger statement is not established. Genetic disease, malignancy, autoimmunity, structural injury, infection and degeneration can involve mechanisms not reducible to impaired elimination. Normal biochemical symptoms cannot be assigned to a hypothetical waste backlog, nor do color changes in stool quantify excreted toxins.

For a real mechanistic example, define one compound, measure exposure, serum and urinary or fecal elimination where appropriate, and specify how altered kinetics would affect a clinically relevant endpoint. If no agent, compartment or measurable effect can be identified, the clearance hypothesis is too broad to distinguish from alternatives.

The Institute can use the framework to ask better transport and toxicokinetic questions, not to promise that fasting or supplements will remove unspecified harmful substances from every patient's body.

Mass-balance reasoning distinguishes external input, endogenous production, compartmental storage, metabolism and elimination.

A patient with reduced renal function may retain specific solutes; a different patient with fatigue and normal kidney indices requires another explanation.

Model identified substances over time and verify that removal, not simply redistribution, corresponds with functional benefit.

Selected scientific reading

1. Longo & Mattson (2014), Fasting: molecular mechanisms and clinical applications, Cell Metabolism.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2013.12.008>

2. Barabási, Gulbahce & Loscalzo (2011), Network medicine: a network-based approach to human disease, Nature Reviews Genetics.

<https://doi.org/10.1038/nrg2918>

Editorial source note: The inherited selected readings are retained from the source manuscript and have not all been independently verified. Newly checked evidence is identified separately. The mechanistic extensions are hypotheses except where explicitly described as established physiology.