

Vectorial Therapy: Medicine Designed to Change Biological Direction

ABSURD HEALTH INSTITUTE | 15 OCTOBER 2026 | III. Beyond targets and state-based pharmacology

Abstract

This concept paper examines vectorial therapy: medicine designed to change biological direction. It develops an argument drawn from Beyond Targets, identifies the relevant biological or clinical mechanisms, and considers where that argument may fail. This is a narrative perspective, not a systematic review or an original clinical study.

The central problem

The source book uses “vectorial therapy” to describe interventions chosen for their tendency to move a biological system from one state toward another. This is an original conceptual term rather than an established treatment class. Its potential value lies in changing the question from “did a marker move?” to “did the patient begin a durable functional trajectory?” The direction must be defined in measurable clinical terms before the idea can be evaluated.

Mechanisms and causal architecture

In metabolic illness, a treatment may lower glucose acutely; a more ambitious trajectory might include improved physical function, reduced progression, fewer adverse events and sustained glycemic control. In trauma, short-term symptom reduction is important, but return of sleep, occupational function and relational participation also matter. Vector language becomes useful when it identifies upstream feedback relationships and feasible interventions that alter future trajectories. It becomes vague when “movement toward health” is merely inferred from feeling better immediately after a treatment.

A discriminating example

The proposed vector metaphor becomes precise when the outcome is defined prospectively. A person may lose weight yet worsen muscle strength; a drug may improve a biomarker yet increase symptomatic hypotension. Neither is unambiguously movement toward health. A useful therapeutic direction therefore includes benefit, harm, durability and the priorities of the patient, rather than a single favorable arrow on a diagram.

Competing explanations and limitations

Many existing disease-modifying treatments already aim at long-term trajectory. Antihypertensives preventing stroke, statins reducing vascular risk and immunomodulators reducing relapse illustrate that conventional pharmacology is not limited to momentary biomarker control. Vectorial therapy must not declare these established successes obsolete or claim that multi-compound regimens are superior without comparative data.

What evidence would change the interpretation?

The proposed test is whether a prespecified package shifts validated patient-important endpoints over time more effectively or safely than established comparators. A shift in numerous biomarkers without better function or fewer events does not meet the test. Different “directions” may conflict, as when weight loss occurs alongside muscle loss or treatment benefit with severe adverse effects.

Implications for medical interpretation

The language of therapeutic direction may help readers distinguish immediate response, sustained remission and disease modification. It is an organizing concept, not a license for untested drug combinations.

Selected scientific reading

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

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

Drucker (2018), Mechanisms of action and therapeutic application of GLP-1, Cell Metabolism.

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmet.2018.03.001>

Original source: Beyond Targets. All source books supplied by the author.

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