

Mind Motivations™ & The Australian Academy of Hypnosis™ Newsletter

July 2009

This year is just going way too fast! It seems like I've just completed developing one newsletter when the next one is due.

Firstly, I'd very much like to thank everyone who has provided contact details updates and confirmation for the database project that I've been doing recently. Prior to this project we had paper-based records with a spreadsheet listing of email contacts. One morning I awoke and thought to myself "gee, a relational database would be a good idea"!

So began the project and there was at least 147 times throughout it that I subsequently asked myself "why did I start this?". Having said that though and gone through the process, I think that it has all been worth it. We now have a relational database with up-to-date contact details for everyone so a very big THANK YOU for bearing with me, reviewing your personal details and providing updates where required.

While I am on the database topic though; a couple of additional points. Firstly, I plan on sending out an email once per year showing the details registered against your name to check for

currency of information. This won't be until mid-2010 but will provide a chance to keep all info up-to-date. Secondly, the list of names that we have and all contact details will never (and I mean NEVER) be shared, provided to or given to any third party. If there is ever any third party information to be shared with the list members, it will always come from either my or the Academy's email address. That way we control the security of the list and have the chance to vet the information for interest, relevance and appropriateness.

By the time you read this newsletter, we would have conducted the second Power Hypnosis Course in Melbourne. Again, there was a very good attendance at this course and all arrangements went off without a hitch. Melbourne was kind enough to turn on typical Victorian weather for us.

Michael Werts
Editor MM_Newsletter

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In Brief:

Next Monthly Training is happening on 1 Aug - Subject is: **Hypnotic Transference.**

Mind/Body Healing Course - WA. To be conducted at the Technology Park Training Venue - 25/26 July. For further information please contact John Vernes.

Next Perth Power Hypnosis Course - Perth 2,3,4 Oct 09. There is no ongoing monthly training in June or July - next session will be **Hypnotic Transference** on 1 August 2009

PHWA meetings are held at 10.00am on the 3rd Sunday of every month at The Stirling Regional Business Centre, 45 Delawney Street Balcatta. Each meeting is followed by approximately a one to two hour training session on a variety of topics.

Advanced Mind Dynamics Course - Melbourne 28, 29, 30 AUG 09.

For more information - Contact Jai Waugh

SLEEP TALK TRAINING conducted by Joane Goulding - September 2009 in Perth. More information will be sent via separate email soon.

Some Quotable Quotes:

We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit.

Aristotle

You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind.

Author Unknown

Our greatest glory is not in never falling but in rising every time we fall.

Confucius

Hypnotherapy Shown to Reverse Pain



http://www.naturalnews.com/026404_hypnosis_hypnotherapy_health.html

(NaturalNews) Hypnotherapy is the use of hypnosis for therapeutic purposes. Hypnosis has been used for medical purposes since 1840 when a young surgeon James Braid noticed

the benefits of the trance state. Hypnotherapy can be used to help a whole range of problems, both emotional as well as physical. Research has shown that hypnotherapy can be hugely beneficial for those suffering with pain.

A study was carried out in 2008 with fibromyalgia patients using MRI scans to look at the activation of pain areas in patients. Simple pain reducing suggestions actually resulted in a decrease in both the pain and changes in the MRI.

Over the years, hypnosis has developed a somewhat negative reputation, mainly due to bizarre stage hypnosis shows and the misuse of the techniques in sales and television programs. Such uses have also fed certain misconceptions about hypnosis including:

*Hypnosis is an abnormal and potentially dangerous state to be in. In reality, hypnosis is the same state people go into when relaxing, reading a book, driving on a motorway etc. The difference with hypnosis is you are entering into this state deliberately and with a certain outcome in mind.

*Hypnosis is a state where the hypnotist has control over you. Although there are a few hypnotists that are using it with questionable ethics, a good therapeutic therapist will tell people exactly what is going on, and in many ways teaches them how to do it for themselves.

*Under hypnosis we can be made to do things we don't want to do. It is true that people are made more susceptible to suggestions, which is one of the reasons why hypnosis is so powerful. Yet even when under hypnosis, people won't do things completely outside of their usual realms of behavior. People will still hold the same values and ethics as they do in their daily life.

With a practitioner you trust, hypnotherapy is completely safe, and an extremely powerful therapy.

The real danger with hypnosis is it is not being used consciously. For example, we are all affected by suggestion, and what we are told by our doctor and specialists about our condition has a major impact. This is especially true if we are already in a state of shock and so more susceptible. If we are told, for example, that our condition is untreatable and we are unlikely to ever recover, this can be like a hypnotic command.

Therefore, apart from hypnotherapy being a potentially powerful tool to reduce pain and heal the mind and body, we also need to be very mindful of how much we listen to what others are telling us about our condition. If we have taken on the belief for example that it isn't possible for us to recover, or that our condition is untreatable, we really need to review whether such beliefs are actually true, or just the opinions of those that told us.

Additionally, becoming aware of how we are speaking to ourselves about our condition is vital to our health and wellbeing. If our internal dialogue is one of constantly questioning and worrying about our situation, we are effectively hypnotizing ourselves to continue to feel a certain way. On the other hand, if we hold a strong belief that we will have vibrant health and optimal wellbeing, we are certainly on our road to enjoying them.

References:

Fibromyalgia pain and its modulation by hypnotic and non-hypnotic suggestion: An fMRI analysis. Stuart W G Derbyshire, Matthew G Whalley, and David A Oakley. *Eur J Pain*, July 22, 2008; PMID: 18653363



Günther in hypnotic dreamland after Austrian success

Christoph Günther could have been forgiven for never teeing up in a Challenge Tour event again after not making a cut on the circuit in a four and a half year period; but the winner of the last week's Kärnten Golf Open presented by Markus Brier Foundation recently discovered the perfect solution to his mental block – he got himself hypnotised.

The 34 year old German, whose unbelievable final round ten under par 62 at Golfclub Klagenfurt-Seltenheim saw him take the €22,400 first prize and re-ignite his professional career, revealed that for the first time in his life he recently went to see a mental coach, who recommended hypnosis as the path to golfing glory.

Günther, a qualified carpenter, accepted the sports psychologist's recommendation and opened his mind to discover a solution that enabled him to free his thoughts on the golf course and, as a result, trigger his victory march in Austria.

"I went to see a mental coach for the first time two weeks ago and it seems to have worked well," laughed Günther after his victory.

"I went there with an open mind to try it and see if it could help. He thought I should try hypnosis, so I thought I may as well see what it is all about. He just spoke to me until I almost fell asleep, or that's how it felt. But then when I was hypnotised I was totally conscious and aware of what he was saying and doing.

"I'm not going to tell you the things that he said specifically, but he put some things into my pre-shot routine and it definitely helped me in Austria."

Günther's victory is quite remarkable given that he played 20 Challenge Tour events between the summer of 2003 and the beginning of 2008 without making a single cut. A seven time winner on the Satellite EPD Tour, he struggled to make the step up to the Challenge Tour until his stunning breakthrough victory last week in Austria.

"I was so frustrated for those years when I didn't make any cuts that when I qualified for the Challenge Tour last year I said to myself that I would take it easy and see how it goes," he continued.

"I wasn't going to force myself into playing events just because I could. I didn't want to put pressure on myself as I had done earlier in my career, when I felt like I had to play because I had a category and I ended up putting way too much pressure on myself."

That pressure to perform on the Challenge Tour no longer exists, but the genial German will look to the future with a reassuring realism.

"Winning in Austria means so much to me – it opens a lot of doors for the rest of the season. It means a lot to be able to prove to myself that I could do it, because there were times I thought I couldn't," said Günther, who moved from 96th to tenth in the Rankings after his win in Austria.

"It also shows that the hard work pays off, and that the people that believed in me – perhaps more than I believed in myself at times – were right."

Script of the Month: Concentration

This script was specifically designed for sufferers of MS whose concentration and memory has been impaired but should help people without MS who wish to improve their concentration, memory and organizational skills.

Many people exercise their body to keep it functioning - but you have decided to exercise your brain. Scientists have discovered that intellectual stimulation can significantly increase the number of brain cells in crucial regions of the mind. Activities which engage your brain and challenge it can help to keep your mind "exercised" and you now find yourself becoming interested in board or card games or crossword puzzles - reading or watching TV news or game shows to stimulate your mental agility.

You keep your brain functioning active and alert by using memory aides such as writing down all appointments, making checklists, or using memory "tricks" - for example, visual images or rhymes - to help you to remember. You consciously practice improving your concentration and you focus when listening to others - in order to shut out distractions and help you to retain new information.

You also use calendars and day planners to help you to keep track of what is going on in your life. Not only do you write in all appointments and upcoming events in your life, but also reminders of things that need to be done by a certain date or time.

You're careful to give yourself enough advance notice for things that need to be done. If the job is something that may need extra effort, write it on a small sticky-note and place it in your day planner or calendar several days in advance of when it is required. If you can't get to it one day, you move the note ahead to the next day, or the next (as long as you finish it before it is due). You keep your day planner with you everywhere you go.

You become much more organized - for you find that taking the time and the trouble to organize is far less time consuming than the effort wasted trying to find things that were lost or misplaced. You train yourself to keep important items in one consistent location. If you previously had problems with your memory you begin to write a list noting each object and where it should be - before taping the list to your refrigerator.

You keep your address, phone number, and license plate number written down in your wallet. This not only helps someone to return the wallet to you if you should happen to lose it, but helps you in filling out forms or giving out that information if your mind suddenly becomes distracted.

From now on you keep all clutter to a minimum. More clutter means less space, and greater difficulty finding lost items. You think about what you really need to keep and what is of no use any more and you get rid of the clutter. Cleaning your house clears out the clutter, both symbolically and literally.

You become much more consistent - storing things that you do need to keep in a logical location and always returning it to that very same place. Your memory has a much better chance of working more efficiently when you reinforce it by using consistent locations for items.

You keep backup copies of important documents, keys and other critical items in a safe place.

You do in now - instead of putting off tasks for "some other time". And if you can't get to the task right away, you schedule it on your calendar or in your dayplanner. Then when you suddenly think of something you need to remember – you write it down right away! You don't wait even a single extra minute to pull out your pad and pen. Catch that thought before it flies away!

You begin to make yourself To-Do lists so that you can keep track of tasks that need to be done - and you



keep them in places where you will be able to see them. And when your task is finished - you congratulate yourself.

You store things in reusable storage boxes with lids, and keep track of what is inside each box by taping a running list of items to the top. Any time you add something to the box, you also add it to the list. Anytime you remove something (permanently) from the box, scratch the item off the list.

You use highlighters in different colors to emphasize important parts in a document or to color code papers to help you organize - and when you are organizing papers - you make sure the subject is on the top of the page. If it isn't there, or is not clearly visible, then you write it across the top. Then, when you are looking for things from a specific group - you are able to quickly identify what you are looking for.

If someone asks you to do something and you think you're not going to remember, you ask them to write you a note with the request and stick the note on your schedule.

If you are interrupted in the middle of a task or something that you are reading, you take a moment to jot down where you are and what the main points of your task/article/book are. This helps to jog your memory once you have dealt with the interruption and have returned to your original task.

You use deep breathing to clear your mind - this helps you to focus and relax your mind and your body.

If some tasks seem too much then you break them down into manageable pieces and tackle one at a time.

Routine aids your memory by establishing a set series of tasks, taking the guesswork out of things. Keeping to a routine trains your memory by constant repetition. If you have a problem with a telephone conversation or with writing a letter - you turn off the TV or radio, let out the dog, send the kids out to play or do whatever you need to do to get rid of the distractions. Then you can focus on the task at hand.

When you're reading you use the 4 Rs – to improve your understanding about what you read - these are Read, Reread, Reorganize, and Review!

You first scan the headlines, pictures and first and last paragraph to get a general idea of what the article is about. Read each paragraph aloud – the more varied language aspects you can include (seeing, saying, hearing, writing) the better. Reread the entire article, highlighting and making notes. Reorganize the article by putting it into your own words. Try to develop opinions and personalize the information. Review the article with someone else and discuss the different aspects. By using these techniques, you can assist those parts of your brain that were not functioning correctly by bringing in other parts that are.

If this seems like a lot of ideas, gadgets and techniques to incorporate into your life - you're quite right – it is. So instead of trying to do it all at once you break it down into manageable pieces in order of their importance. Add those pieces to your routine one at a time, giving each new technique sufficient time to become habitual before adding anything else. Keep adding until you have enough tricks in your repertoire to compensate for any previous memory impairment.

Memory and concentration intensify your capacity to store all those wonderful subconscious learnings. All you need to do is relax, and let go. And let that learning be a wonderful part of you.

In a moment I'll count from one to five, and as I reach five you'll find yourself fully alert.

One, two, three, four, five.

A Word from Rick Collingwood:

Hi and welcome to July. I trust this month finds you happy and well. Congrats to Michael on another great newsletter. I had hardly got myself over the jetlag of returning from Switzerland, and have just returned to Perth from Melbourne where Michael and I have finished conducting the second Power Hypnosis course and first Fascination Hypnosis training which was received and taught very well. It always feels great to pass on the real hypnosis knowledge.

Now that John has got WA completely sorted the academy is moving ahead very well to establishing a firm presence in Victoria where all of the training courses and curriculum are now on offer including a three day Advanced Mind Dynamics Mind Body Healing training in late August, and the 8 day Certificate training which will have its inaugural start in late September this year. Michael Werts and Jai Waugh are the contacts for all Victorian training information and enrolments. Victorian students can find all relevant information and dates at www.mindmotivations.com

I am due to travel to the USA in late July and back to the UK in mid August where I have been asked to conduct a five day training for a group of cancer hospice nurses in London, and also to begin the set up a cancer clinic using hypnosis and other evidence based non toxic cancer treatments in a hospital in Switzerland which is very exciting but very draining at the same time. I expect that I will be away on a 6 week on and 6 week off basis for much of the latter part of this year and next year as well, but it is refreshing to know that there is an opportunity to bring hypnosis into the cancer fight in a professional way without having to overly justify what hypnosis can do in regards to working with disease. Having said that The Australian Academy of Hypnosis will continue to expand and develop within Australia thanks to the help and expertise of John and Michael, and I am always available on email if you need to be contact me for any reason.

I would once again urge students to ensure that you join PHWA even if it is only to ensure that you get yourself listed on the National Hypnotherapy Register. Every member of all of the hypnotherapy associations in Australia, with the exception of the AHA, is now listed on the register, and the only way you can become listed is to belong to an association registered with the CCH. All West Australian CCH and PHWA members are now listed so there is no further work to do.

There is a Global Hypnosis Summit being conducted in Sydney in Sept by the AHA, information regarding the seminar is available on the AHA website. In my opinion the summit may be a good visit for those who wish to meet and socialise with some interstate and a few international speakers, but perusing the speakers at the Summit, apart from one or two of them it could be an expensive disappointment if you travel there expecting to further your hypnosis skills or education.

Last week the "Certificates of Hypnosis Field Therapy" were finally sent to all students who had requested one. I must apologise for the late delivery of the Certificates but I was delayed in Europe for 2 weeks longer than I expected and upon my return the wrong issue dates were on them so they all had to be redone. I trust that all those students who received them are happy with the presentation and the finish. The Certificates of Hypnosis Field Therapy are A3 size full colour and available to any student who has completed the Certificate of Hypnosis, The Advanced Certificate of Hypnosis, and The Power Hypnosis Training and the one day Hypnotic Fascination Training. The cost of the Certificates is \$275 inc GST, and if you would like one please email me at hypnot@iprimus.com.au.

Remember if you have any articles, information, or stories that you would like to submit to the newsletter for publication please submit them to Michael before the 10th of any month as I am sure he and all of the other students would greatly appreciate it

Well that's all from me, so until August have a safe busy and fantastic July.
Kind Regards
Rick Collingwood



Melbourne Power Hypnosis Course



Between 10 and 13 July, the second Power Hypnosis Course was conducted in Melbourne. A total of 27 students completed the Power Hypnosis Course and the Fascination Training. This was the first time that the Power Hypnosis Course and the Fascination Training had been combined into a four-day training and this proved to be most worthwhile. The feedback from the students was entirely complimentary and once again, a number of experienced hypnotists attended the training and enhanced their induction skills.



The next Power Hypnosis Course (four-day combining the Fascination Training) will be conducted in Sydney in September and an additional course, the Advance Mind Dynamics course, will be conducted in Melbourne at the end of August. There has already been some considerable interest shown in the Advance Mind Dynamics Course and this three day training will provide students with specific and enhanced skills at working with Pain Management, Cancer etc.

Michael Werts

CHANGING behaviour, ACHIEVING your goal Hypnosis helping people overcome variety of problems

KENNEBEC JOURNAL *Morning Sentinel*

BY BETTY JESPERSEN

Staff Writer

<http://morningsentinel.mainetoday.com/news/local/6435415.html>

With three kids under the age of five, Mae Swan, 23, of Industry was having no luck on her own dealing with stress, an addiction to caffeinated soda and her weight.

Kitty Gee of Chesterville, a 78-year-old grandmother, had lived all her life with the compulsion to bite her nails until they bled. Her husband, John, an 83-year-old decorated World War II hero, has been unable to curb his appetite.

Mt. Blue High School English teacher and actor Dan Ryder struggles with stress and combating clutter and a lack of order in his life that hinders his creatively and productivity.

What these people have in common has been a need to make changes in their lives but the inability to do it alone.

What they also have in common is hypnosis.

"I chewed my fingernails all my life and tried everything to stop but nothing worked," said Kitty Gee. "One session was all it took and now the idea of biting my nails is repulsive."

Swan said within a week of starting her group sessions at Franklin County Hypnosis Center in Wilton, she no longer wanted to drink soda and stopped buying it.

"I was skeptical at first. I always thought hypnosis was hocus-pocus. Not anymore. I've lost 10 pounds, I'm making healthy food choices and it has helped me get through my barriers," she said. "It is miraculous."

John Gee lost eight pounds in two weeks after a session and has been religiously doing daily self-hypnosis sessions at home. He says he has lost all interest in overeating.

"I am backing away from the table now. I just don't have the desire," he said.

Ryder said hypnosis, and in particular the technique of journeying into one's past life, have helped him better understand the barriers, or "locks," in his subconscious that were holding him back from making improvements.

"It has been a transformative experience for me," he said.

Hypnosis, which dates back to ancient times, has been recognized in modern times as a technique to help people change behaviors and achieve personal goals.

It can help addictions, problems with weight, lack of self-confidence, concentration, insomnia, fears, stress and anger. In addition, it has been shown to improve academic performance and sports ability and is widely used by professional

athletes, according to the National Guild of Hypnotists.

Consulting hypnotists Dawn and Dennis Jepson own Franklin County Hypnosis on Main Street in Wilton. Dawn Jepson holds an alternative doctoral degree in clinical hypnotherapy, a bachelor of science degree in human services, and an associate's degree in mental health. Her specialties are weight reduction, women's issues, healthy living and past life regression.

Dennis Jepson has a bachelor of science degree in physical education and specializes in smoking cessation, sports and academic enhancement and stress management.

"We believe that people possess the knowledge necessary to solve their own problems or identify their own need for change," Dawn Jepson said. "Our primary focus is to help clients realize that they do have choice in all areas of their lives and identify what those choices are."

"The work we do is designed to create independence and to teach people to use the tools and techniques on their own," she said.

Hypnosis works through deep relaxation, Jepson said. After a free consultation that helps the therapist design a personalized program, the client will be guided into a hypnotic state using a variety of relaxation and energy techniques.

"They go into a 'focused relaxation' state where the mind becomes receptive to suggestions and the brain waves slow down," she said.

In reality, people experience hypnotic-like states every day when they daydream, just before falling asleep or becoming full awake, and whenever that "unconscious pilot" takes over while driving a familiar road or concentrating on a task, she said.

During a session, the client is fully aware of communications, is able to respond on request and only focuses on what is relevant to the task, she said.

There is no surrender of mind or control. A person who does not want to be hypnotized cannot be hypnotized, Jepson said.

"The irony is that they are actually taking control back. They come to see us because they cannot control themselves and they want to regain that power over their life," she said.

Hypnosis helps them make the changes they want to make.

"It makes it easier for people to follow through on what they want to do, to make

them more willing to do it and make it less of an effort, to make it more comfortable. And it gives them the momentum to keep going on their own," she said.

Sessions are recorded on a CD and clients are given a copy to take home so they can listen to the session at least daily to reinforce the information.

"Repetition is proven to be critical to make any kind of behavioral change," she said.

Paula Widmer, a licensed clinical social worker, has a counseling and life coaching practice in Wilton. She has referred several patients to the Jepsens to augment talk therapy with hypnosis.

"It is an intervention that can get beneath a person's conscious thinking to beneficially change their behavior," she said. "I have clients who have a lot of resistance to making the changes they desire."

She said clients may find it a struggle to make healthy eating choices. They may have anxiety, or need to reduce physical pain that gets in the way of functioning. She said hypnosis has also had a positive impact on clients with addictions.

"They come back excited and very relieved and with new hope for a different future," she said.

Past life regression

A growing number of clients are interested in past life regression, a technique that can guide them into accessing memories from past lives, Jepson said.

"I am very careful not to suggest anything to them during regression work. I am there to help them focus and assist them in remembering what it is they need, whether it is in their present or past life," she said.

The value of this technique is that it can help people unlock memories from past lives that aids them in overcoming obstacles in the present.

"By remembering what happened in a past life can fix or heal something in a person's present life," she said. "By letting go of the things that block them from making change, they find they can be more creative, more compassionate, more forgiving, more understanding or can have the courage to follow their dream."

Betty Jespersen



EVI SHAW: Hypnosis, relaxation can ease some illness symptoms

Evi Shaw

Thursday, June 18, 2009

<http://www.gosanangelo.com/news/2009/jun/18/evi-shaw-hypnosis-relaxation-can-ease-some-illness/>

When we think of women's health, our thoughts are automatically directed towards images of nurses and physicians, especially ob/gyns. However, there are also psychological approaches to this topic.

Many health concerns are best treated when physicians and mental health providers act together as a team.

I attended a workshop in Denver recently that was given by the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH). It was taught by Jackie Irland, M.D., fellow, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and assistant professor of the same discipline at the Medical College of Wisconsin. Her co-instructor was Molly Delaney, doctor of psychology, ASCH-approved consultant, who is in private practice in Maine.

Some therapy goals for infertility problems can be to increase coping skills for physical, emotional and hormonal fluctuations, to stabilize the autonomic nervous system, to strengthen the ego, and to prepare for medical procedures.

Most of us have probably heard stories in which a couple tried hard to conceive a child, had fertility studies done, in vitro fertilization and so on. All this pain and expense. Once the couple relaxed and allowed things to happen naturally, they had a child.

The limbic system of the nervous system is most affected by hypnosis, and its amygdala does not listen to anything we say on a conscious level. It just knows, for example, that certain things are scary, but one can talk to the amygdala via hypnosis and change the significance of certain experiences. The use of metaphors can be especially helpful to reach the amygdala.

PMS was addressed as a psycho-physiological problem. There are many possible causes, but the most likely etiology is underlying neurobiologic vulnerability to normal hormone fluctuations and serotonin dysregulation.

This problem is perfect for psychotherapeutic work with or without hypnosis, along with other interventions such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications for bloating, increase of complex carbohydrates, yoga, meditation and so much more.

Menopause was addressed, along with goals for hypnotic work such as stabilizing the autonomic nervous system with mind/body therapy, decreasing the suffering or symptoms perception and guided imagery of cooling mountain lakes for hot flashes.

Dr. Jacqueline Ireland stated that increasing testosterone levels do not do much for some menopausal symptoms, while estrogen deficiency is the most usual cause of symptoms. Should symptoms worsen, other physical and psychological problems should be considered.

The problem of autoimmune diseases was also discussed at great length, where there is an overactive immune system and the body attacks itself, as in lupus, MS, rheumatoid arthritis and more. Psychotherapy can help with the anxiety caused by the disease and stress because symptoms are increased by stress.

Therefore it is good to provide self-soothing and self-care, to change perceptions of symptoms and to augment the efficacy of medical treatment while diminishing side effects. Patients can be taught to change or control symptoms and their response to symptoms.

If you are affected by women's health issues and what you are doing is not working for you, make an appointment with your mental health provider to reduce as many symptoms as possible for a better quality of life.

Evi Shaw is a licensed professional counselor in solo private practice, a diplomate of the American Psychotherapy Association and an approved consultant of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis.



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Your imagination is your preview of life's coming attractions.
Albert Einstein

Where beams of imagination play, The memory's soft figures melt away.
Alexander Pope

Believe that you have it, and you have it.
Latin Proverb



Quick Look: Alternative Therapies

written by Max Golby

http://www.pharmiweb.com/Features/feature.asp?ROW_ID=1208

Wasted investment, mismanagement of resources. Unquestionably, these two issues have haunted the NHS (National Health Service) more than anything else during the past eight years of Westminster government. And yet, for all the warnings, public funds are increasingly approved for what many still consider to be some of the most experimental of treatments.

Yet, in a month that the National Institute for Clinical Excellence issued a landmark recommendation that alternative therapies be used for the [treatment of back pain](#), alternative treatments may well be on the verge of something of a breakthrough in the health service. Indeed, in a considerable step away from past lines of procedure, this latest ruling by NICE strongly questions the effectiveness of conventional treatments, replacing them instead with alternative options such as osteopathy and ‘needling’ and by doing so, setting the scene for further debate over what some professionals see as the debateable effectiveness of some of these unorthodox new methods. In announcing the landmark ruling, the institute’s clinical and public health director, Richard Littlejohns, heralded the benefits of these new treatments as ‘sufficiently robust’ to take the place of other, more conventional treatments. Adding that, “As with many interventions the underlying process of how acupuncture works is still not completely clear, but I think the evidence still shows that on balance patients do better”. Hence, with the increased movement towards alternative therapies, and the growing need to make tough choices in relation to the NHS’s ‘huge budget shortfall’, this month’s editorial calendar asks the question: How far has our faith in alternative treatments matured in the UK?

Unquestionably, some of the controversy surrounding certain forms of alternative therapies is fading. Indeed, these latest guidelines approve and recommend a diverse range of alternative treatments for back pain, including everything from 10 sessions of acupuncture or nine visits to experts in ‘spinal manipulation’. Be that as it may, and where NICE and those above them are keen to grow these types of treatments and remove some of the negative stigma that surrounds them, a significant proportion of medical professionals (particularly GPs) are still yet to be entirely convinced. Certainly in this sense, it can be reasonably argued that NICE are recommending and approving treatments that Doctors themselves, in at least some cases, do not feel entirely comfortable prescribing. Speaking after the announcement of NICE’s latest recommendations and guidelines, Professor David Colquhoun, research fellow in pharmacology at University College London and a prominent opponent of alternative therapies opined that “This is an official endorsement of mumbo jumbo and the implications of that are terrible, for the NHS, and for the taxpayer”. Moreover, and without wanting to overstate the power of the opposition, Professor Colquhoun is most certainly not alone in his beliefs, with Edzard Ernst, Professor of Complementary Medicine at Peninsula Medical School, also suggesting that the guideline is “very overoptimistic”.

To point to a few further examples of the ways in which alternative therapies are continuing to gain ground in the health service: aside from the first official recommendation of alternative therapies by NICE in the aforementioned area of back pain, other alternative therapies are also gaining ground and some are even more controversial than others. For example, according to a report this week utilizing information recently obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, the NHS is reported to have spent £12m over a three year period on homeopathic remedies – a form of treatment widely regarded to be ‘biologically implausible’ and completely out of step with anything at all resembling credible scientific research. Published in August 2005 in the leading medical journal, The Lancet, a major review and study of homeopathic treatments concluded them to be no better at producing a cure than placebos and prompted some doctors to call for the immediate suspension of funding. It comes as something of an unfortunate surprise then, to find that over 4 years later, the NHS continues to squander public funds on unequivocally ‘mumbo jumbo’ therapies, whilst potentially tarring the names of other, more credible treatments in the process. Indeed, it is doubtless for the very reason that such non-science is still funded by the NHS that suspicion continues to besiege the very principle of alternative therapies.

Equally, it’s important to remember that where a number of these treatments would have been shunned outright in decades past, there is certainly a wider trend towards an acceptance that alternative therapies do have some role to play - in coalition with traditional forms of medicine. Certainly, treatments like acupuncture have more legitimacy than homeopathy and hypnotherapy continues to prove its usefulness in a number of fields. It should come as no surprise then, that amongst a number of prominent proponents of hypnosis, leading American academic, David Spiegel of Stanford University, recently urged NICE to add hypnotherapy to its list of approved treatments for a number of conditions – including allergies and high blood pressure – adding that “It is time for hypnosis to work its way into the mainstream of British medicine”. The trick then, is being able to differentiate between the progressive and the proven and the genuinely ‘mumbo jumbo’. As GPs do their best to make this distinction, directives from the top create an increasing division between regulator and medical professional.

Yet, beyond the already existing brouhaha that engulfs the topic of the regulation of alternative therapies in this country, the introduction of the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC) in January of this year has added yet another layer of confusion to the ways in which alternative therapists are allowed to advertise their practices. For where beyond ensuring that its members sign a code of conduct and complete an appropriate period of training, the CNHC actually takes little interest in the validity of the claims made by its members. This, the Economist Newspaper argued back in January of this year, is in direct opposition to new consumer protection laws introduced in 2008, which clearly forbid false claims that a product (or service) can cure a disease. For the scientists and medics already uneasy about the development of alternative therapies, then, the CNHC has only added yet another layer of obfuscation and uncertainty, when what the industry really requires is some genuinely tough questioning about the empirical effectiveness of its practices and even stricter regulation of its future conduct. Until that point is reached, the controversy that surrounds alternative therapies is unlikely to go away.

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Up Coming Dates:

Monthly Ongoing Trainings

Lesson Seven: Hypnotic Transference	Saturday, 1st of August, 2009
2 day Mind-Body Workshop and Certificate	Saturday&Sunday, 25th/26th of July, 2009
Three Day Advance Mind Dynamics course - MELBOURNE	28, 29, 30 August 2009
Four Power Hypnosis Course SYDNEY	18, 19, 20, 21 September 2009

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General Contact Details:

Rick Collingwood:
Mobile: 0420 322 763
Email: hypnot@iprimus.com.au

Michael Werts:
Mobile: 0401 634 355
Email: michael.werts@inet.net.au

John Vernes:
Mobile: 0403 839 641
Email: linearhealth@inet.net.au

Victorian Training Coordinator
Jai Waugh
Mobile 0412 879 850
Email: jaiwaugh@bigpond.net.au

Newsletter Email:
MM_Newsletter@inet.net.au

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