

Research Studies on Arthritis & Hypnotherapy

In 2000, researchers from the Institute of Medical Psychology, Ludwig-Maximilian-University in Germany conducted a study involving 66 Rheumatoid Arthritis patients. The patients who used hypnosis experienced clinically significant improvements in both subjective measurements (e.g., to assess the severity of joint pain/function) and objective measurements (e.g. testing blood samples for indicators of inflammation). The patients who used hypnosis improved more than the patients in the study who used other techniques – such as relaxation. And improvements became even more significant if one of the patients in the study practiced hypnosis regularly during follow-up periods.^[2,1]

2.1. The Effect of Hypnosis Therapy on the Symptoms and Disease Activity in Rheumatoid Arthritis

Results: Results indicate that the hypnosis therapy produced more significant improvements in both the subjective and objective measurements, above relaxation and medication. Improvements were also found to be of clinical significance and became even more significant when patients practiced the hypnosis regularly during the follow-up periods.

Notes: The present study aimed to assess the effectiveness of clinical hypnosis on the symptoms and disease activity of Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA). Sixty-six RA patients participated in a controlled group design. Twenty-six patients learnt the hypnosis intervention, 20 patients were in a relaxation control group and 20 patients were in a waiting-list control group. During hypnosis, patients developed individual visual imagery aimed at reducing the autoimmune activity underlying the RA and at reducing the symptoms of joint pain, swelling and stiffness. Subjective assessments of symptom severity and body and joint function, using standardized questionnaires and visual analogue scales, were obtained. Objective measures of disease activity via multiple blood samples during the therapy period and at the two follow-ups were also taken. These measurements were of erythrocyte sedimentation rate, C-reactive protein, hemoglobin and leukocyte total numbers.

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