

Medical evidence for hypnosis

After decades of controversy, hypnosis might have broken into the mainstream.

Although the American Medical Association takes no official position on hypnosis, the American Psychological Association says most clinicians now agree it can be a powerful, effective therapeutic technique.

Research has shown promising results for some patients, according to the National Institutes of Health in Bethesda.

Hypnotherapy might be helpful in managing symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome, based on reviews of research literature, it said.

Studies have shown substantial long-term improvement of gastrointestinal symptoms, as well as anxiety, depression, disability and quality of life. Similar results were seen with hot flashes in breast cancer survivors, who also reported significant improvements in anxiety, depression, interference with daily activities and sleep. A clinical study with 200 participants is ongoing. Self-hypnosis reduced pain and anxiety in women undergoing a type of core needle breast biopsy, according to a 2006 study by Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, a teaching hospital of Harvard Medical School.

In a 2010 study, Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York City recommended hypnotherapy for the treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder-associated nightmares.

For information, go to <http://nccam.nih.gov/health/hypnosis>