



University of Sydney Trial 2004/2006.

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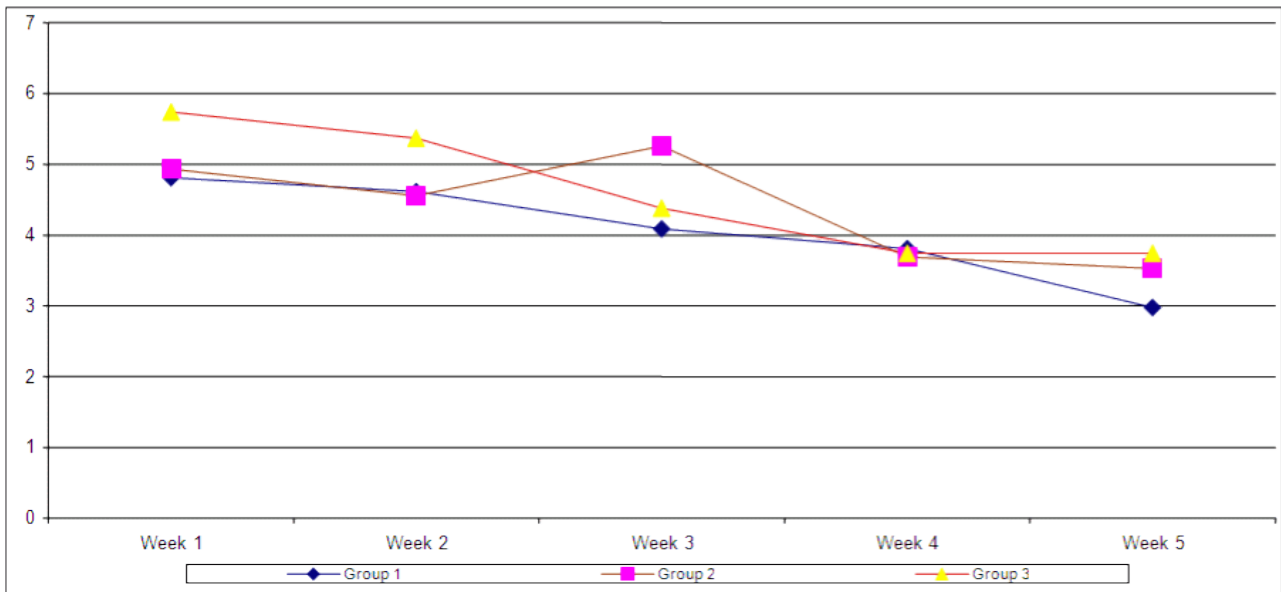
FIRST AUSTRALIAN TRIAL ON HYPNOSIS AS A TREATMENT FOR IRRITABLE BOWEL SYNDROME.

Volunteers for the trial were randomly assigned to one of three groups: two experimental groups (either holistic or standard gut-directed hypnosis) and one control group (relaxation therapy). Throughout the trial, participants completed the Bowel Symptom Severity questionnaire which assessed the degree to which IBS symptoms interfered with their daily lives, and the SF-36 which broadly related to the participants quality of life, mental health, and social activities.

At the commencement of the trial period, the majority of participants (82%) suffered abdominal pain most of the time (of these, 59% had mild to moderate pain and 41% had severe to very severe pain) with 61% of participants experiencing pain several times a week or daily. In the three months prior to treatment, 98% of participants experienced bloating and 78% of participants had visible abdominal swelling. All participants presented with either anxiety or depression. The majority of participants in this study were women (86%), and the majority of sufferers were aged between 20-40 (82%).

All participants demonstrated improvement in the overall severity of their individual IBS symptoms and quality of life at the end of the treatment period, with the holistic group (blue) having a numerically better outcome than the other two groups.

Irritable Bowel Syndrome Symptom Scales (BSS1-5) - Overall Symptom Severity by Treatment Groups and Control Group.



Psychological treatments, such as hypnotherapy, are rarely suggested to IBS patients as, up until now, medication (such as antispasmodics, antidepressants, anti-diarrhoeals and laxatives) has been the treatment of choice. Considering the high cost of medication, repeated visits to medical practitioners, and the high prevalence of stress, IBS sufferers would obtain a great deal of benefit from programmes such as hypnotherapy.