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Hypnosis Appears to Ease Inflammation in Ulcerative Colitis

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Jun 27 - Hypnotherapy prompts a reduction in components of the inflammatory response in patients with ulcerative colitis, UK researchers report in the June issue of the American Journal of Gastroenterology.

"This work shows that a single short session of hypnosis can return some of the chemical changes in the bowel associated with inflammation back towards normal in patients with ulcerative colitis," senior investigator Dr. David S. Rampton told Reuters Health.

Dr. Rampton, of Barts and the London, Queen Mary School of Medicine and Dentistry, and colleagues studied 17 patients with active ulcerative colitis who underwent a 50-minute session of gut-focused hypnotherapy aimed towards relaxation and relief of inflammation. Another 8 patients, who acted as controls, listened to their choice of music for 50 minutes.

Hypnosis decreased the pulse rate by a median of 7 beats per minute and blood flow by 18%.

It also reduced the median serum IL-6 concentration by 53%, and markers of rectal inflammation were also significantly reduced. Rectal mucosal release of substance P fell by 81%, IL-13 by 53%, and histamine by 35%.

The control protocol had no effect on studied variables.

The study "provides a scientific basis for a properly designed clinical trial to see whether hypnotherapy, given over some weeks or months, could have a beneficial effect in this condition and conceivably Crohn's disease," Dr. Rampton concluded.

The Effect of Hypnosis on Systemic and Rectal Mucosal Measures of Inflammation in Ulcerative Colitis

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