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Study Shows Hypnosis May Benefit Those with Ulcerative Colitis

Hypnosis therapy can reduce the inflammation that leads to the symptoms of ulcerative colitis, according to a study conducted by researchers from Barts and The London School of Medicine and Dentistry, and published in the *American Journal of Gastroenterology*.

Approximately 1 in 600 people in the United States suffers from ulcerative colitis, an inflammation of the colon that can lead to chronic abdominal pain and diarrhea. The disease is most common among people between the ages of 15 and 25 or in their 50s, with women affected more frequently than men.

Researchers assigned 17 people suffering from active [ulcerative colitis](#) take part in a 50-minute, "gut-focused" [hypnotherapy](#) session designed to help them relax and to relieve their [inflammation](#). A control group of eight other patients instead listened to their choice of music for the same length of time.

The researchers found that blood levels of various markers of inflammation decreased significantly among those who had undergone [hypnosis](#), but not among those in the control group. In particular, levels of the marker known as IL-6 fell 53 percent in the experimental group, compared to no significant change in the music group.

"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 researcher Dr. David S. Rampton said.

Prior research has also found that hypnotherapy relieves the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome and ulcers, other digestive disorders in which inflammation and psychological stress are known to play a role. Based on this body of research, Rampton suggested that hypnosis might also be able to aid in the treatment of other inflammatory bowel diseases, such as Crohn's [disease](#).

The mechanism by which hypnosis relieves bowel inflammation is not yet known. Rampton said that a longer clinical trial is now needed to see if hypnotherapy can lead to long-term improvement.

Sources for this story include: www.reuters.com.

Langmead, L., & Rampton, D.S. (Feb 2002). Plain abdominal radiographic features are not reliable markers of disease extent in active ulcerative colitis. *American Journal of Gastroenterology*, Volume 97, Number 2, 1, pp. 354-359(6).

