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Traditional, Complementary, Alternative, and Psycho-Social
Modalities of Treatment
 Larry Lachman, PsyD

Post-treatment self-help groups effective with chemical dependency

Norwegian researchers John-Kare Vederhus and Oistein Kristensen, of the Addiction Unit of Sorlandet Hospital in Kristiansand, Norway, report that among 114 patients – 59 with alcoholism and 55 with polysubstance dependency, the 38% who were still participating after hospital treatment in such self-help groups as Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous showed an 81% abstinent rate compared with only 26% abstinence of those patients who had not continued participating in self-help groups in the 24 months following hospital treatment. The researchers partly conclude, “This study shows a positive relationship between participation in 12-Step-based self-help groups and desired treatment results... Health workers therefore ought to recommend their patients to participate in self-help groups as a part of their rehabilitation.”

BMC Psychiatry 2006, ISSN: 1471-244X

SSRI anti-depressants may begin working in the very first week

Dr. Matthew Taylor and colleagues at the University of Oxford's Warneford Hospital report that after conducting randomized placebo-controlled trials involving 5,872 patients and observing their responses during the first six weeks of SSRI anti-depressant usage, those getting the medication versus those who received placebo had a 50% chance of obtaining clinical improvement by the end of the first week. Taylor partly concludes by writing, “...if a patient had started taking an SSRI and described feeling better after only a week of treatment, we might have thought that response was too quick, and perhaps they would have improved even without the medication... Now we will know that the treatment may have played a role, and that should help us make better informed decisions about important questions like stopping medications.”

Archives of General Psychiatry 2006; 63:1217-1223

Biofeedback improves pediatric ADHD

Dr. Ute Strehl and colleagues at the University Tübingen in Germany studied 23 children diagnosed with ADHD ages eight to 13 who underwent 30 one-hour biofeedback training sessions, featuring images of a ball and using small gifts used as reinforcements. They found that the children could regulate negative slow cortical potentials to the extent that 5 of the students no longer met the criteria for ADHD. WAISC scores also went up following the EEG biofeedback sessions. In other words, the children learned to regulate their brain waves to the extent that their behavior, attention and IQ scores improved. Dr. Strehl concludes, “With voluntary regulation of slow cortical potentials, children may learn to flexibly adjust their cholinergic-dopaminergic balance to task requirements.”

Pediatrics, (2006: 118:e1530-e1540

Lower quality of life for hormone treated prostate cancer patients vs. surgical intervention

Dr. Dr. M. L. Essink-Bot of the Eindhoven Cancer Registry in the Netherlands reports on 964 men diagnosed with prostate cancer between 1994-1998 in a 10 year follow-up study. Utilizing the Short Form Health Survey, they found that those prostate cancer patients who underwent a radical prostatectomy had the highest scores on quality of life measurements compared to patients who underwent hormone therapy – who ended up having the lowest scores. Men who underwent either radiation or ‘watchful waiting,’ fell in the middle score range. Acknowledging that baseline pre-existing factors could also explain these results,

Cancer, (2006; 107:2186-2196

Gel-cap “cold therapy” in the treatment of migraines

Dr. Serap Ucler and colleagues at the Department of Neurology at the Ankara Training and Research Hospital in Turkey studied 26 people with migraine headaches. Using a cold therapy gel cap from 25 minutes up to 3 hours, visual analogue scale scores for distress from the migraine dropped from 7.89 to 5.54, and after a second migraine attack, from 7.7 to 5.4, respectively. Dr. Ucler and colleagues partly conclude, “Cold application alone may be effective in some patients suffering from migraine attacks. Its combination with conventional drugs should be investigated in future studies.”

Evidence- Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine 2006 3(4):489-493

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