

Did you know?

Facts about hypnosis from current research findings.

As of December, 2004 there are more than 5,000 clinical research studies having to do with hypnosis and its benefits currently being conducted worldwide?
(According to: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>)

As of December 15, 2004 results from more than 3,000 clinical research studies are available showing positive benefits from hypnosis?
(According to: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/>)

According to studies done at the Institute of Cognitive Neuroscience, University College London, suggestions given in a hypnotic state, even once, can produce actions in human beings that are the same type of actions that would have resulted from more long-term conditioning and practice.

In a research study on Self-hypnosis for relapse prevention training with chronic drug/alcohol users, (Am J Clin Hypn. 2004 Apr;46(4):281-97), individuals who played self-hypnosis audiotapes "at least 3 to 5 times a week," at 7-week follow-up, reported the highest levels of self-esteem and serenity, and the least anger/impulsivity, in comparison to the minimal-practice and control groups.

In a research study done with 60 college student volunteers (Spring of 2004 at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona), using hypnosis with ego-enhancement suggestions showed "significantly dramatic effects" in brain-wave patterns, subjective sense of self-confidence, and test scores.

As reported by NewScientist.com news service:
"Hypnosis is more than just a party trick; it measurably changes how the brain works," says John Gruzelier, a research psychologist at Imperial College in London. "Hypnosis significantly affects the activity in a part of the brain responsible for detecting and responding to errors, an area that controls higher level executive functions." The finding is one of the first to indicate a biological mechanism underpinning the experience of hypnosis. "This explains why, under hypnosis, people can do outrageous things that ordinarily they wouldn't dream of doing," says Gruzelier, who presented his study at the British Association for the Advancement of Science Festival in Exeter, UK. Gruzelier hopes it will also benefit emerging research showing, for example, that hypnosis can help cancer patients deal with painful treatments.

Research using positron emission tomography (PET) scans, shows that hypnosis might alleviate pain by decreasing the activity of brain areas involved in the experience of suffering. Scientists have found that hypnosis reduced the activity of the anterior cingulate cortex, an area known to be involved in pain, but did not affect the activity of the somatosensory cortex, where the sensations of pain are processed.

Clinical trials of therapeutic hypnosis confirm its potential benefits. Christina Liossi, a psychologist at the University of Wales in Swansea, recently conducted a study of 80 cancer patients aged 6 to 16. She found that those under hypnosis experienced far less pain during treatments than control children, who simply talked to the researchers normally.

According to published results of clinical studies (Am J Clin Hypn. 2004 Apr), the use of hypnosis facilitates a more uncomplicated birth process. In a separate research study done by University of Florida counseling psychologist Paul Schauble, it was also found that women who learn hypnosis before delivering babies suffer fewer complications, need less medication and are more likely to have healthier babies than are women without hypnosis. Schauble's first study involved adolescents getting prenatal care at a public health clinic. A group of 20 patients who received hypnosis preparation were compared with 20 who were given supportive counseling and 20 patients in a control group who received only the standard prenatal care. None of the women who received hypnosis required surgical intervention in their deliveries, compared with 12 in the supportive counseling group and eight in the control group, he said. "Patients who are prepared for labor and delivery in hypnosis are more likely to absorb and benefit from information because they are in a relaxed, highly focused state," he said.

In an ongoing pilot study being done by University of Florida counseling psychologist Paul Schauble, preliminary results show hypnotized patients with hypertension are more easily able to make lifestyle improvements that can lower blood pressure.

A study being done by a team of University of Florida researchers is finding that learning self-hypnosis gives a patient greater control over the stress, anxiety and pain of medical operations and childbirth, overall. "Training patients in hypnosis prior to undergoing surgery is a way of helping them develop a sense of control over their stress, discomfort and anxiety," says Dr. Paul Schauble, psychologist. "It also helps them better understand what they can do to bring about a more satisfying and rapid recovery." He also said, "We've found, in working with individual patients, that they often feel literally stripped of control when they go into the hospital. The surgeon may do a good job of explaining the surgery, but patients' anxiety may make it difficult for them to absorb or comprehend. This can result in undue apprehension that can create complications or prolonged recovery."

"Children make excellent subjects for hypnosis because they spend more time using their imaginations," says Florida counseling psychologist Paul Schauble. "But with practice most adults can learn how to enter into a therapeutic hypnotic state quite easily as well."

In 1998 Henry Szechtman of McMaster University in Ontario and his co-workers used PET to image the brain activity of hypnotized subjects who were invited to imagine a scenario in which they were listening to someone speaking to them, and who then actually experienced a scenario in which they were listening to someone speaking to them. The researchers noted that the act of imagining a sound, called hallucinating a sound, was experienced exactly the same as real hearing, both being experienced as coming from an external source.

18 separate studies found that patients who received cognitive behavioral therapy plus hypnosis for disorders such as obesity, insomnia, anxiety and hypertension showed greater improvement than 70 percent of the patients who received psychotherapy alone.

Disclaimer:

Hypnosis cannot, and should not, stand alone as the sole medical or psychological intervention for any disorder. Hypnosis should not be used instead of appropriate medical, dental, or psychological treatment, and any individual with a medical or psychological problem should first consult a qualified health care provider for diagnosis and professional advice. Hypnosis should only be practiced by those who have been appropriately trained, who practice appropriately, and within the scope of their training.

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