

Facts about Hypnosis from current research findings.

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Results from more than 3,000 clinical research studies worldwide are available showing positive benefits from hypnosis. (<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 Lioffi, 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 (American Journal of Clinical Hypnosis, 2004 April), 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.

Women who underwent hypnosis before breast cancer surgery needed less anesthesia, spent less time in the OR, and experienced less postoperative pain than women who were not hypnotized—improvements that yielded cost savings for the health care facility, according to a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*. For the study, researchers from **Mt. Sinai School of Medicine** in New York randomized 200 women to receive 15 minutes of hypnosis with a psychologist or simply meet with a psychologist before undergoing lumpectomy or biopsy. Women in the hypnosis group were encouraged to visualize a relaxing place—frequently a beach scene—and were given information on how to manage

pain, nausea, and fatigue. The researchers found that women in the hypnosis group received significantly less sedative and analgesic treatments overall compared with women in the other cohort. The hypnotized women also spent nearly 11 fewer minutes in surgery—saving the institution an estimated \$773 per patient—and reported less postoperative pain, nausea, fatigue, and emotional upset. The lead researcher notes, however, that he needed to convince patients of the benefits of presurgical hypnosis, adding that he told them that the researchers would not make them “cluck like a chicken or sing like Madonna” during the session. He concludes that while hypnosis is not “magic,” it does confer clinical benefits (Reuters/*Los Angeles Times*, 8/29; Gardner, *HealthDay*, 8/28; Phend, *MedPage Today*, 8/28).