

News stories concerning clinical hypnosis are always welcome – from anywhere in the world. Please send items to the News Editor at 16 Connaught Street, LONDON W2 2AF, United Kingdom.

Fresh attempt to end the chaos

WITHIN the spectrum of European hypnotherapy, the situation in the United Kingdom has more than once been tagged as “bewildering.”

That just might be another classic example of British understatement. Maybe “chaotic” would be a better description.

Estimates suggest UK clinical hypnosis is divided between up to 70 separate associations, societies and registers – including at least three rival “umbrella” groups.

Previous attempts to regulate the profession, create an officially recognised national body and establish standard criteria for training and competence have all failed.

Now however there is a fresh move towards self-regulation which, for once, shows strong indications of success.

For a new working group is now preparing to begin drawing up a feasibility study on the options for nationally recognised qualifications.

And that could be the first step towards even more significant developments.

The working party was elected in November 1993, during a London meeting of invited representatives from a range of hypnotherapy bodies.

Standards

These organisations included the Council for Hypnotherapy, the Association of Hypnotherapy Organisations, the Institute of Complementary Medicine Hypnotherapy Group, several schools and professional associations – plus a number of independent practising hypnotherapists.

Called a “Hypnotherapy Workshop”, the meeting was chaired by C.A.S.T., the partly government funded Complementary and Alternative Medicine Steering Group.

C.A.S.T. has responsibility for promoting the development of national standards within

By
EJCH Reporter

complementary medicine, as well as representing the interests of complementary medicine on the British Government's Occupational Standards Committee.

It also liaises with existing bodies such as the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and the Department of Employment.

Self-regulation

The all-day meeting included a presentation from the External Manager of the “Care Consortium” – a Department of Employment body responsible for the development of standards within the complementary field.

In addition a representative from the General Council of Registered Osteopaths described the way osteopathy achieved registered recognition from the government.

It became increasingly evident during plenary sessions held throughout the day that there is a strong wish among UK hypnotherapists for an officially recognised national body with responsibilities for recommending to government action on minimum training standards and self-regulation.

There was also a widespread feeling that the formation of the working group will prove a major step towards establishing a genuinely

**Joint working party
established to draw-up
self-regulation
proposals**

representative body for British hypnotherapy.

As part of its remit for producing a feasibility study on nationally recognised qualifications, the working group will also examine the possibility of National Vocational Qualifications.

In the longer term the working group looks likely to begin compiling a comprehensive register.

UK hypnotherapists are being invited to submit their own views to the working group and a copy of the eventual report will be distributed to all interested parties.

EJCH will pass on information

To ensure impartiality, it was decided that no training colleges or schools will be represented on the working group.

However their contributions will be necessary at a later stage when the initial groundwork has been completed.

The working group will have an independent chair – from outside hypnotherapy – and its first meeting has been set for early January.

• The working group has still to set up its own secretariat to which evidence and proposals can be submitted. The EJCH is in no way involved in the work of the group but has agreed to act as a Postbox for the inquiry and will forward any written correspondence.

Scottish study confirms benefits of hypnosis for expectant mothers

FIRST TIME mothers appear to benefit more from hypnotherapy than women who have experienced previous pregnancies.

That was among the findings of a five-year study carried out in Aberdeen to assess the effects of hypnosis on women in the first and second stages of labour.

More than 260 women took part in the study which confirmed that hypnosis has a useful role in obstetrics according to a report by Dr Mary Jenkins in the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

Only spontaneous deliveries were included – 126 first pregnancies and 136 second pregnancies – of women who underwent six sessions under the instructions of a hypnotherapist.

Among first-time mothers on the trial, significantly more needed less pain relief than the control group, but the effects were less marked among second-time pregnancies.

There were also significant reductions in first stage labour for first time mothers – but not for second pregnancies.

British government denies any plans for new legal controls

Prospects of hypnotherapy in the United Kingdom being regulated in the near future have been firmly quashed by the British government.

Despite last year's promises to examine ways of promoting "safe and competent" hypnotherapy, the House of Commons has now been told there are absolutely no plans for legislation.

This confirmed the EJCH's own forecast that although the Department of Health was "considering" the position of clinical hypnosis, doubts remained over whether anything substantial would emerge.

Political pressure to introduce some form of regulation has been growing in Britain for several years and was given a fresh impetus by the British Medical Association's report on complementary medicine.

Commons Question

The BMA called for the creation of central registration and the establishment of recognised training standards for complementary therapies, including hypnotherapy.

Last summer Junior Health Minister Tom Sackville said the BMA report would "make a significant contribution to aiding understanding in the field of complementary medicine."

Further pressure for legal controls came with recent legislation regulating osteopathy and a fresh bid to introduce a private bill to regulate chiropractors.

Shortly before Christmas the Minister was again questioned in the Commons, this time by Tory MP Andrew Hunter who suggested it was time to bring in "measures to regulate hypnotherapy and related practitioners."

Mr Sackville however insisted there were no plans and repeated his earlier claims that the British government welcomed efforts of reputable training institutes to develop standards of training, voluntary registration and certification of hypnotherapists.

By EJCH Reporter

After ten years of help for migraine sufferers Surprise prize for medical hypnotherapist

More than a decade of hypnosis has won general practitioner **Dr Denys Nicol** the title of "Migraine Doctor of the Year."

It has also won him a £500 prize, neurological equipment and a certificate from the British Migraine Association.

The Association canvassed its members to nominate "a particularly kind and understanding doctor" who understood the problems of migraine sufferers and was encouraging and supportive.

From more than 500 entries, the Association selected Dr Nicol for his work in relieving migraine pain.

For it was impressed by the success he has achieved among his patients, which includes teaching them auto-hypnosis to help them cope by themselves.

Homework training

But Dr Nicol, who practices at the Swan Medical Centre in Yardley, Birmingham, was totally unaware he was even being considered.

Unbeknown to him, he was nominated by a grateful patient – Mrs Priscilla Hodges – pictured with him at the presentation in London's Cafe Royal.

For more than ten years now, Dr Nicol offers hypnosis to patients who suffer migraine attacks more than once a month.

He finds it usually takes about four or five sessions – "with a bit of homework" – to train patients.

Describing his technique as simple, he says it involves reliving under hypnosis a recent migraine attack and then "rubbing away" the pain.

Dr Nicol points out that while migraine attacks involve a succession of chemical changes, relaxation under hypnosis helps stop this cycle.



Dr Denys Nicol – "Migraine Doctor of the Year" – with Mrs Priscilla Hodges, the patient who nominated him