

A new technique with potentially important implications for hypnotherapy

Could it be ... the pain in Spain strays mainly from the brain?



Writes
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Hypnotherapists may soon find yet another new word slipping into their professional vocabulary – **Noesitherapy**.

It is worth making a note of the term. For when employed in conjunction with hypnosis, noesitherapy has enormous potential to assist clients with a range of problems.

So what is it? Well ... in essence it is a technique in which a physical response is triggered by the accumulation of saliva.

Yes, that's right – saliva!

For the accumulation of saliva in large quantities is claimed to activate the Vagal Response Mechanism, which in turn overrides the Flight/Fight Response and enables the patient to attain a mental state which will not admit the concept of pain.

The author of this technique is Spanish surgeon, Dr. Angel Escudero, who denies that his methods include hypnosis. He insists it is a combination of physical response and positive thinking. However, for the hypnotherapist, Escudero's procedures readily lend themselves to a wide range of hypnotic techniques.

Escudero took the word 'NOESI' from the Greek – a word that has no direct translation but which Escudero has taken to mean, *Healing by Positive Thinking*. In essence it is the word used to describe the phenomenon of pain control that he developed at his practice in Valencia.

So what is Noesitherapy? Simply, the therapist, after careful preparation with the patient, engages the Vagal Response Mechanism, transmits his own positive image of the patient and requests that the patient repeat a carefully worded affirmation.

The techniques involve the engagement of physical as well as mental responses. Pain stimulates the stress mechanism that operates via our sympathetic nerves and the hormone, adrenaline.

These slow the heart rate, cause the peripheral arteries to dilate and activate one other parasympathetic function – increase salivation – whereas adrenaline activates the sympathetic fibres and dries the mouth.

The vagus nerve runs from a nucleus in the medulla of the brain and supplies the muscles of the respiratory system, the heart, lungs, oesophagus, stomach, small intestine, most of the large intestine and the gall bladder with parasympathetic fibres.

The parasympathetic fibres innervate all the involuntary muscles and glands of the gastro-intestinal tract (including the salivary glands). At a seminar at Birkbeck College, London, early in 1994 demonstrations and explanations of the technique were given by Surrey-based hypnotherapist Ken Fry.



Picture courtesy of BBC Television

*Dr Escudero
demonstrates
pain control
with a patient*

Pain is one of the stimuli that causes the *fight/flight* response to mobilise. It tenses everything up, the peripheral blood vessels constrict, the heart races, blood pressure increases and there are increased transmission of impulses (pain).

However when you stimulate the vagus nerve (the tenth cranial nerve) you stimulate the parasympathetic fibres which have the opposite effect.

Ken Fry's interest was first aroused by a BBC television documentary which showed remarkable facility to eliminate the sensation of pain and suggested part of the technique was closely related to hypnosis.

Unfortunately, this same television programme also sparked the interest of others who appear not to have been as reputable as Dr. Escudero would have wished – but more of this later.

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charisma, which assists in instilling faith in
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The London seminar was told Dr Escudero had developed a technique which enabled patients to undergo major surgery without chemical anaesthesia.

The audience heard how the BBC documentary had included film of operations for problems ranging from varicose veins to a lower leg bone realignment. Ken Fry also described scenes of a woman giving birth in a pain-free, joyous manner ... and how the technique had even enabled the removal from a boxer dog's stomach a hair-brush that it swallowed!

What was remarkable also was the complete absence of any antibiotic form of chemotherapy throughout these operations, some of which were lengthy and complicated.

All the patients shown were fully conscious throughout, frequently seen in conversation with Dr. Escudero's wife who remained at their bedside, chatting companionably.

Dr. Escudero's own interest in the technique was brought about by his daughter, Marie-Jesus. At the time she was only nine-years-old and had been waiting apprehensively to have her ears pierced.

When the day arrived however Marie-Jesus told her father her ears would not hurt because she had *told* them not to. She appeared so confident he reached forward and pinched her ear lobes. Marie-Jesus smiled back at him, unaffected.

Then he pinched the tops of her ears and more predictably she yelped. Of course – the power of mind over matter. However, Escudero decided to test the thesis further.

First and foremost is positivity – that mindset which simply does not countenance the concept of incurability or the necessity to experience pain.

Hypnotherapists are familiar with this and have heard, witnessed and experienced many examples which demonstrate its truth.

Yet how many of us have sufficient faith in the power of our mind to undergo major surgery without chemical anaesthesia?

Dr Escudero added one vital extra ingredient to 'mind over matter' – spit. To put it more delicately, saliva. Lots of it. Then lots more.

Yes, it sounds bizarre. It may even sound disgusting. And yet the filmed evidence was there for all to see. It appeared to work. Ken Fry decided to research further into Escudero's claims.

The *fight/flight* response of course initiates a rush of adrenaline, causing the pupils to dilate, the heart rate to increase, the skin to blanch and the mouth to become dry.

Now, by consciously amassing as much saliva as possible in the mouth, the Vagal Response Mechanism is activated by stimulating the vagus nerve. Pupils are static, skin tone is constant and heart rate normalises.

Escudero maintains that as pain has been registered as travelling at 120 metres per second, it is outrun by the Vagal Response, which travels at 200 metres per second.

On this basis, coupled with his obvious self-belief and extraordinary charisma which undoubtedly assists in instilling faith in his patients, Escudero has performed more than 1,000 operations.

The advantages post-operatively are enormous. In fact, Escudero reports a zero infection rate (this has been totally disbelieved by other medics world-wide – such a record is virtually unheard of. Yet certainly there are no known reports of any of Escudero's patients suffering post-operative infections) and the dangers inherent in general chemical anaesthesia are non-existent. As we all know, chemical anaesthesia blocks the entire body off from feelings of any sort while psychological anaesthesia is applied only to the specific area in question.

No success at first

Ken Fry wondered whether some form of hypnosis was being used. Escudero himself denies it, favouring instead the expression *mind-to-mind transmission*.

Nonetheless, Ken decided to experiment with what he had learned of Noesitherapy alongside his own specialist knowledge of hypnosis.

Initially he reported no success whatever. In trance, Noesitherapy simply did not work for him.

However, when he first of all induced trance, elicited a state of deep relaxation, gave suggestions for optimism and positivity, reoriented and then applied what he had learned of Noesitherapy, the Surrey hypnotherapist began to achieve favourable results – some of which were quite remarkable.

Ken Fry stresses the importance of the therapist's own state. The therapist must feel at least on par if not perfectly on form; must have a clear idea of how the client would be if completely well and happy; have discussed the client's condition thoroughly and understand what the client requires. A positive, carefully worded affirmation would then be devised and agreed between client and therapist.

The client is then requested to amass as large a quantity of saliva in the mouth as possible and to repeat the affirmation along with the request for psychological anaesthesia to the area in question.

The results are startling. Ken claims to have had success with arthritic conditions, tinnitus, circulatory problems, rheumatism and all forms of pain relief.

At the seminar he demonstrated with individuals having sinus problems, arthritic conditions and post-fracture pain.

Each individual reported feeling a change of temperature in the affected area. They were all

encouraged to continue repeating their affirmations with a fully moistened mouth in their own homes.

There are provisos which Ken is very careful to include – Noesitherapy is not a cure-all and it would be quite wrong to claim that it is.

Unfortunate attention

Also, the agreed affirmation must be subtly designed with the greatest care. Unless you are a qualified surgeon no doubt you will avoid sawing through anyone's leg, a la Escudero.

Nonetheless, as an additional tool in the hypnotherapist's kit-bag, Noesitherapy is at the very least harmless and at its best a truly remarkable method of pain relief.

In the autumn of 1993 the BBC broadcast in the United Kingdom a consumer programme "Watchdog" which reported an unfortunate attempt by an organisation to capitalise on the techniques, and which made grandiose claims to have been personally selected by Dr. Escudero to be his representative in the United Kingdom.

These claims were totally unfounded and refuted by Dr. Escudero.

In contrast, Ken Fry makes no such claim to be an accredited representative in these techniques – merely to report to as large an audience as possible how these techniques have worked for him as an adjunct to hypnosis.

He has been a practising hypnotherapist for several years. He employs an eclectic and unconventional approach to his work, willing to experiment and bring to his patients the best of both traditional and modern techniques.

Ken Fry is a member of the Corporation of Advanced Hypnotherapists and the National Register of Advanced Hypnotherapists.

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