Reviewer's report

Title: Efficacy of hypnosis/guided imagery in fibromyalgia syndrome - a systematic review and meta-analysis of controlled trials

Version: 1 Date: 1 February 2011

Reviewer: Miyuki Mizutani

Reviewer's report:

Major Compulsory Revisions

1. The authors tried to address scarcity of qualitative review on the efficacy of hypnosis in fibromyalgia. So you included guided imagery in your review, because both methods have the common aim to promote change in subjective experience by suggestion and/or imagination. The question is posed here: what is the essence of hypnosis in pain treatment?

The authors excluded studies without defined pain related suggestions/guided imagery. But pain related suggestion is necessary only in experimental situation but not indispensable in clinical pain control. It depends on individual circumstances whether such suggestion is necessary or not. The pain related suggestion hinders concentration and absorption in some cases by alerting patients to pain.

So the title needs to be changed to “Efficacy of hypnosis/guided imagery with pain related suggestion in fibromyalgia syndrome - a systematic review and meta-analysis of controlled trials”.

But the better way to accomplish this review is to do the same analysis in the group of studies without pain related suggestion and to compare the two groups of study concerning the efficacy, under the present title.

2. Quality of rating scale is wisely employed to examine the validity of the eligible studies. In the Result, six studies are judged to have an excellent treatment quality with sum score more than six. But the therapist training subscale is inadequate in three studies and the client engagement subscale is inadequate in three studies. These two subscales are related to the essence of hypnosis. If therapists are not adequately trained and patients are not in trance in sessions and do not execute homework at home, the study fails to be the study on hypnosis/imagery, even if other subscales are adequate.

I would like to recommend the authors to analyze separately and compare the studies with adequate therapist training and adequate client engagement with the other trials. Your conclusion will be totally different.

3. Autogenic training is addressed as active therapy such as PT and CBT. But autogenic training is one of the self hypnosis training.

Minot Essential Revisions

1. The authors describe attention control as unspecific element of
hypnosis/guided imagery such as education, emotional support, pure relaxation, suggestions without induction of hypnotic trance. Emotional support is not attention control. It is a part of treatment as usual. In place of the word attention control, "cognitive intervention", “cognition oriented approach” seems to be more appropriate to mean education, pure relaxation, suggestions without induction of hypnotic trance.

2. The words; “Eligibility criteria” (p5), “inclusion criteria” and “the first level of inclusion criteria” (p7) are employed inconsistently.

3. Und (p7)

4. The word “single” is inappropriate. “individual” is better in “single therapy” (p8).

5. “On study” is “one study” (p9)

**Level of interest:** An article of importance in its field

**Quality of written English:** Needs some language corrections before being published

**Statistical review:** Yes, but I do not feel adequately qualified to assess the statistics.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests.