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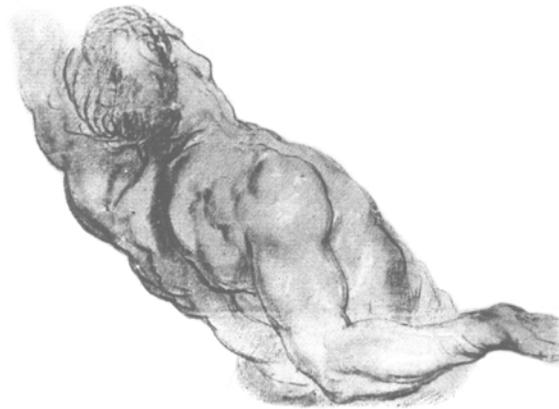
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Table of Contents

Editorial By Jacqueline A. Carleton, Ph.D.	3
The Science of Body Psychotherapy: Part 2. The Current Situation By Courtenay Young	5
Teaching the Whole Student: Experiential Activities in an Online, Undergraduate Course in Somatic Psychology By Leslie Ann Costello	15
A Tale of Four Body Psychotherapists: The Training and Practice of Mexican Practitioners By Fernando Ortiz Lachica, PsyD	24
Part II - The Adolescent Brain: Clinical Applications By Deborah Harkin, PhD	32
The Relational Turn and Body-Psychotherapy I. From Ballroom Dance to Five Rhythms: An Introduction to Relational Psychoanalysis and Psychotherapy By Asaf Rolef Ben-Shahar, PhD	41
Relational Living Body Psychotherapy: From Physical Resonances to Embodied Interventions and Experiments By Julianne Appel-Opper	51
Stream of Consciousness: The Impact of the Positive Relationship in Contrast to Prolonged Isolation By Jerome Liss, M.D.	57



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USABP Mission Statement

The USABP believes that integration of the body and the mind is essential to effective psychotherapy, and to that end its mission is to develop and advance the art, science, and practice of body psychotherapy in a professional, ethical, and caring manner in order to promote the health and welfare of humanity.

The Science of Body Psychotherapy: Part 2. The Current Situation

Courtenay Young

Abstract

Part One essentially described the various definitions of body psychotherapy and a historical overview of Janet and Reich's scientific work up to the Second World War (Young, 2009). In Part Two of this four-part series, the post-war scene of psychotherapy and body psychotherapy is examined, with a description of what is now being meant by "science" in psychotherapy (especially in Europe) in this context. The differences between the different forms of science, natural "objective" science, social science, medical science, and political science are examined. The current state of science in psychotherapy is also examined here, as well as two reviews of science in body psychotherapy. What is also mentioned is where there have been significant failings to use science in body psychotherapy, and what was focused on instead. Some abstracts of recent scientific research projects in body psychotherapy are given in the appendix. In Part Three, what is appropriate science, and what is not, is discussed further with some solutions being proposed. In Part Four, there is an examination of various aspects of neuroscience that impinge on body psychotherapy.

Key Words

Body Psychotherapy – Development – Political Science – Clinical – Medical Research – Reich – Modalities – Training

Post-War Scientific Developments

Body psychotherapy, as a reaction to various rejections, first of Reich by Freud, then of Reich in Europe, and then later in post-war America of Reich by the FDA, was, in the late 1950's, left in the hands of a very few people mostly trained by Reich, such as Ola Raknes in Norway, Elsworth Baker, Alexander Lowen, John Pierrakos, Myron Sharaf, Eva Reich, and a few others in the United States.

As a result of the various attacks against Reich, body psychotherapy, as a method, had generally begun to focus on developing different themes, social theories, methods of practice, clinical skills, and other refinements, perhaps as a way of staying acceptable. Yet it did not, individually or collectively, try to challenge the "rejection" from its peers and from society for many years. However, these post-war developments did not involve much "science."

The "orgonomists," a very small group of largely American psychiatric practitioners, mostly trained originally by Reich, then later by Elsworth Baker, a pupil of Reich's, continued to follow his clinical and scientific work, albeit fairly rigidly. "They have kept Reich's central concepts clearly in focus and have developed many of them. Some orgonomists have done important original research which expands Reich's ideas." (Sharaf, 1983, p. 481) The backlist of the *Journal of Orgonomy* is very comprehensive and constitutes, in itself, an impressive "body" of science within the wider field of body psychotherapy¹. However, they do keep very much to themselves, and their publications are not widely listed. In addition to this, many body psychotherapists have never really heard of them. Their development of the science of body psychotherapy has been mainly in the clinical application of many theoretical aspects (case histories, character studies, mental health, sexuality, and the application of therapy), and here they have interestingly paralleled developments in other psychotherapies. They have also done some research into other non-therapeutic aspects of Reich's work, including research on "bions," cosmology, and weather control.

In the aftermath of Reich's trial, imprisonment and death, body psychotherapy (though it was not called that then) went into a decline for a few years. Then in the 1960s, body psychotherapy – as a field – found itself, quite suddenly, mostly unforeseen, in a rather comfortable place, being largely accepted within the Human Potential Movement, in association with various body-therapies, and amongst the humanistic, phenomenological and existential psychotherapies (Goodrich-Dunn & Greene, 2002: p. 93-96), where it has largely stayed ever since. Part of this was due to Fritz Perls' acceptance of the body (Perls had known Reich in Europe) and part of this was due to a widening of perspective that included the body, along with the mind and even the spirit, as interconnecting aspects of the whole person. Not much "science" was done in the early days of Humanistic Psychology, and the "scientific" view was even denigrated as being impersonal. Unfortunately, the later development of the "New Age" and the continuance of non-scientific methodologies hindered any proper development of the science of body psychotherapy. There was still a solid level of exterior background support from educationalists, psychiatrists and social thinkers like A.S. Neill, R.D. Laing, Arthur Koestler, and the anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (Sharaf, 1983). Reich's work had also influenced people like Frank Zappa, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Itzhak Perlman, Fritjov Capra, Saul Bellow, Alan Ginsberg, Norman Mailer and William Burroughs, (Mannion, 2002), as well as William Steig,² Orson Bean,³ and even Kate Bush.⁴ These people all helped, one way or another, to popularize Reich's work after his death.

¹ http://www.orgonomy.org/Main_Publications.html (accessed 11/12/08)

² Popular cartoonist and artist for Wilhelm Reich's (1972) 'Listen, Little Man!' London: Souvenir.

However, this placement within humanistic psychotherapy and amongst the *cognoscenti* also meant that body psychotherapy did not really have to “prove” itself, particularly as the humanistic field, especially in the 1960s & 1970s, seemed fundamentally against any form of “scientific proof.” And ironically, “humanistic psychology developed as the response of a number of influential psychologists to perceived deficiencies in the psychological theory and research of this same time period” (Moss, 1999).

John Rowan (2000), an eminent humanistic psychotherapist, complains about the nature of research ethics, in that the basic ethical paradigm is one where the researcher is “in charge,” “sets the rules,” “remains objective,” “keeps his distance,” and “uses the research subjects to prove or disprove his hypotheses at his convenience”. Thus the researcher meets the subject in a very role-bound way. The language is very pejorative and this affects the research, even though in Britain nowadays, the people on whom the research is conducted are called “participants.” He goes on to identify several areas of research in which the most objective, basic empirical research is also the most alienated. He points out that these fields of qualitative research have a number of embedded ethical problems. In wider forms of research, or in more quantitative ones (that is to say in those that are more in the field of human enquiry), the role of the researcher changes, and the research is more so done *with* people, rather than *on* people. Maslow’s work is important here, but the field also includes hermeneutics and phenomenology and it has been strongly influenced by social movements such as feminism. Rowan also looks at another less well-known field of research; that of critical social action inquiry. Here the fundamental purpose of the research is questioned and “the main aim of the scientist became the amelioration of the human condition.” He includes two further fields, but they don’t really impinge on where body psychotherapy is at the moment.

As a result of this association with humanistic psychology, body psychotherapy found itself frequently being “lumped” with body therapy techniques, like Rolfing, and other (possibly) more radical “psychotherapeutic” techniques, like Janov’s Primal Therapy (Clare, 1981). And this trend continued into the 1970’s and 1980’s, with only a few books about body psychotherapy being considered as actually respectable (Lowen, 1958; Boadella, 1976). However, none of these radical “body therapies” or “primal” techniques really has anything to do with body psychotherapy. As a reminder, the term “body psychotherapy” still did not exist yet, so it is being applied retrospectively. The common terms of the time were the names of the various “modalities” – Bioenergetics, Orgonomy, Radix, or the therapies were known by the name of their founder, and the only generic term perhaps was “neo-Reichian.”

During this period, there were also very few genuine “scientific” projects. Alice Ladas (2005) is perhaps one exception, as she did some research into women’s sexuality⁵. This study tried to show if there were differences between the theory of Bioenergetic Analysis and the experiences of women within Bioenergetic Analysis. It was in the form of a mail questionnaire. Ladas comments in a footnote:

Bioenergetic Analysts have done a lot of education, developed many important therapeutic techniques and taught them to many people. But there is no published research apart from clinical observation. (Ladas & Ladas, 2005)

This is pretty much true for most methods within body psychotherapy and mind-body therapies in this period. In a large meta-analysis of research on the efficacy of mind-body therapies on cardio-vascular disease, one of the conclusions was:

Reviewers found only a handful of randomized, controlled research studies conducted in the United States. As a result, there is a lack of replicated studies with which to determine appropriate treatment dosage and the mechanisms by which many of the practices work. Compelling anecdotal evidence, the presence of some controlled research, overall cost effectiveness, and the lack of side effects resulting from mind-body treatments make further investigation a high priority. (Luskin et al, 1998, 2000)

The field of body psychotherapy was growing steadily, becoming wider and more diverse, and began having many different components and links, but it was not doing research – its energies were all going in these other directions. The exploration and diversification of techniques and methods continued apace throughout this period and into the early 1990s. Science was unfortunately sometimes somewhat conspicuous by its absence in these new and developing body-oriented psychotherapies: indeed, that type of thinking was sometimes even demonized. There was no real attempt (other than those specifically mentioned) at any form of rational analysis, nor of proper differentiation, nor of any systematic study. And that was also, as mentioned, a feature of Humanistic Psychology and New Age movement: we were all into “holism” rather than the so-called “abstractions,” “objectivities” and “reductionism” of science.

Bioenergetics, one of the first neo-Reichian body-psychotherapies, originally founded by Alexander Lowen and John Pierrakos, had developed quite a numerous list of publications (books and journal articles) with a reasonably healthy scientific basis, although there have only been a few “properly” done scientific research studies. Lowen’s very successful books, *The Language of the Body*, *Bioenergetics*, *Love & Orgasm*, *The Way to Vibrant Health*, etc., had done a lot to popularize body psychotherapy, but the only real body of “science” lies in the numerous journal articles, a few of them peer-reviewed (but

³ An actor who wrote about his experiences of Reichian therapy in ‘*Me and the Orgone*’ (1971) New York: St Martin’s Press, and then helped to found the 15th Street School, along the lines of A.S. Neill’s Summerhill School.

⁴ In a song entitled “Cloudbusting” on “The Children of the Night” album.

⁵ The actual research was done in 1977

many were not), and in unpublished collections of conference papers in Bioenergetic Analysis stretching over the last forty years. Currently, there is no comprehensive single listing of all the publications, research and scientific work for Bioenergetics, nor for any of the other forms of body psychotherapy, but a single-word search in the most recent version of the EABP Bibliography of Body Psychotherapy (Young, 2006, 2009) brings up more than 250 different published references, whereas a similar search on the APA's PsychNet⁶ only brought up 4 references.

The Political Science of Psychotherapy

As mentioned in previous articles, I have explored some of the history of this development and diversification in America (Young, 2008) and in Europe (Young, 2010), where, in the 1990s, the “professionalization” of psychotherapy started. This was a determined attempt, still ongoing, to create a separate and distinct profession of psychotherapy, parallel to clinical psychology and psychiatry. Some European countries have already started to pass “laws,” as yet not fully tested in the courts, to restrict the practice of psychotherapy only to psychiatrists and psychologists. This would effectively have prevented any of the multitudes of non-academic or non-medical lay psychotherapists from practicing. And this was set within the context of a free labor market across Europe, established by the European Union, which means that someone who is able to practice psychotherapy legally in one country could not be prevented from practicing legally in another. It was therefore necessary to create a common standard of training, and also to define what was meant by psychotherapy.

The European Association of Psychotherapy (EAP) created the 1990 Strasbourg Declaration on Psychotherapy, which stated that:

1. Psychotherapy is an independent scientific discipline, the practice of which represents an independent and free profession.
2. Training in psychotherapy takes place at an advanced, qualified and scientific level.
3. The multiplicity of psychotherapeutic methods is assured and guaranteed.
4. A full psychotherapeutic training covers theory, self-experience, and practice under supervision. Adequate knowledge of various psychotherapeutic processes is acquired.
5. Access to training is through various preliminary qualifications, in particular human and social sciences.

The EAP currently represents about 128 organizations (28 national umbrella associations and 17 European-wide associations for methods of psychotherapy) from 41 European countries and, by that, more than 120,000 psychotherapists. More than 5,000 of these now have been awarded the European Certificate of Psychotherapy. All this necessitated putting psychotherapy – and particularly the various methods or modalities within psychotherapy – onto a more “scientific” basis, and thus the 15 Questions for Scientific Validity were established (see Appendix 1, in Part 1: (Young, 2009)).

So, in Europe, all the different methods of psychotherapy, including body psychotherapy (promoted by EABP) as a mainstream, Biosynthesis, Psycho-Organic Analysis, Concentrated Movement Therapy and Bioenergetic-Analysis Psychotherapy, have been accepted as “scientifically-valid” by a submission of substantive answers to the 15 Questions and by a peer-review process of these answers within the EAP. The “answers” to the 15 Questions on the Scientific Validity of body psychotherapy are available on the EABP website (www.eabp.org). Additionally to this, by the same process, various modalities within body psychotherapy have also been accepted as “scientifically-valid,” such as Hakomi, Bodydynamics, Unitive Psychology, Biodynamic Psychology, Emotional ReIntegration, Character-Analytic Vegetotherapy, Psychotherapeutic Postural Integration, etc. Some of these “answers” are also posted. Biosynthesis, Bioenergetics and Concentrated Movement Therapy have also all been “scientifically validated” independently by the EAP, though using the same protocols.

This is what I refer to as the “political science” of psychotherapy: science, but not really science, and yet the considerable body of knowledge and information contained in these “scientific validation” documents is quite astonishing.

The Medical Science of Psychotherapy

However, all of these mainstreams and methods – and any other modalities of body psychotherapy (as well as many of the humanistic psychotherapies) – still do not meet, and perhaps nowadays need to meet, what is considered as the “gold standard” of science. These are Randomized Control Trials (RCT). This is the only form of (medicalized) “science” that seems to be accepted by governmental bodies such as Health Ministries. The RCTs also have to have all the other criteria, such as significant numbers, proper statistical analysis, publication in peer-reviewed research journals, and evidence of significance greater than the normal placebo effect, that form this “gold standard” that is being demanded by these quasi-medical, quasi-political governmental bodies. Furthermore, any studies that cross into different diagnoses are also ignored, so a study that looks at both anxiety and depression is ignored both for the evidence-base for depression, and for the evidence-base for anxiety. This is known as the “science” of an “evidence-based” practice. However, it is also very political in that it excludes a great number of methods that have value, and there is difficulty in proving these methods according to the criteria.

⁶ <http://psycnet.apa.org/>

Of course, these Health Ministries, and in the UK, the departments that give guidelines to the medical profession as to what treatments should be prescribed for what conditions (UK NICE⁷ & SIGN⁸, etc), do not supply any funding for such trials; they just set the “goalposts” and they keep on upping them. So, they, *de facto*, effectively manage to “prove” only what they want to prove, or what is proven already by such exclusively “managed” criteria. This hegemony is only just beginning to be questioned (Nel, 2009).

What is also studiously being ignored in this context, for example, are the numerous meta-studies, which “show” that there is no significant difference between the various psychotherapeutic methods; all are basically better than a placebo effect. Also being ignored is that the most significant factor is actually the rapport between the therapist and the patient (a good working relationship) and the level of determination of the patient to get better.⁹ Especially by the Health Ministry in the UK, the findings of a particular fairly widespread “tool,” the Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE) system¹⁰, that measures both the patient’s progress in therapy, as well as being able to give a measure of comparative efficacy between different therapists, are being ignored as well. Again, this shows little difference between the various therapeutic methods, which is of course inconvenient and, given the predominance of CBT, even somewhat politically incorrect.¹¹ So, this is another application of the “politics” of “science” in psychotherapy. In the case for the only current widely accepted “evidence-based” psychotherapy, CBT looks somewhat weaker in this light and indeed is being shown up to be less effective with certain client groups, for example, amongst schizophrenics.

Furthermore, it seems as if there is considerable resistance from within the profession of psychotherapy in general to accept, or even understand, almost any type of research. Boisvert & Faust (2006) examined practitioners’ knowledge of general psychotherapy research findings and found that, whilst some psychotherapists showed excellent familiarity with outcome research, many did not. Furthermore, many had believed that the findings were less positive than reality, and had thus discounted them. This is probably as true for Body-Psychotherapists as for the other psychotherapists. So, we need, at some point, to look at what lies behind our resistance to “science” and “research”: are we scared that it will take us away from our bodies? Some “science” certainly does. But, whilst we need to meet the parameters of the outside world, we also need to do it in a way that does not compromise our integrity as “natural scientists.”

What body psychotherapy therefore probably needs to do, **in this context**, is to produce, say, four to five substantive research studies, possibly from different countries, dealing with a particular condition, such as depression. In addition to this, each study would have sufficient numbers (say 50-100), with a properly randomized control group, a sufficient number of follow-up studies, a degree of “scientific” rigor, and a statistical analysis (published in a reasonably prestigious, ‘scientific’ peer-reviewed journal) in order to show a significant degree of efficacy that cannot be explained by the placebo effect. These sorts of studies then need to be repeated for anxiety, for OCD, for trauma, for phobias, etc (see later).

So we will have then “proved” body psychotherapy to be “evidence-based” to *their* satisfaction. One of the next sets of questions are, “with who, how, where, and with what funding do we do this?” I believe this is the role of the national association for body psychotherapy in each country, possibly working together, and translating any findings of projects within their country into English: or from English into their own language. These translations will help people in other countries access the research, and so it can be used in that country. It is a task that cannot and should not be confined to one modality or another within body psychotherapy. It is a task that will take about fifteen years. And this is, again, another form of “science.”

The Present Science of Body Psychotherapy

There are, thankfully, several other ways of looking at the “science” of body psychotherapy. The latest version of the EABP Bibliography for Body Psychotherapy (Young, 2006, 2009) lists about 500 results for the single-word search “Research” (206 entries from Books or Chapters; 277 Journal articles; 7 Papers; 6 Tapes; 1 Thesis; 1 Video; and 9 websites), whereas there are only 132 results for the single-word search “Science” and only 22 results with the single-word search “Efficacy”. This is out of just over 4,000 entries, and most of these with abstracts. This Bibliography is now being published on the Internet, via the EABP website: www.eabp.org/bibliography. It is a comprehensive searchable database, thus similar to PsychLit or PsychIndex (the APA databases). This means that people can now check what is out there, and there is also a facility to enable people to add new material to it. Non-English entries have an entry in their language, as well as an entry in English. There are also categories for student theses, conference papers, tapes & films, websites and website-based articles. We want to encourage body psychotherapy training schools to adopt this database, and, it is hoped that with a little encouragement, the number of entries will soon grow to about 10,000. This then becomes a very powerful “scientific” research tool in body psychotherapy.

⁷ NICE: UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence: a governmental body that checks out the ‘science’ – and cost – of medicines and treatments and recommends which can be used by the National Health Service in England & Wales.

⁸ SIGN: Scottish Intercollegiate Guidelines Network: develops evidence based clinical practice guidelines for the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland

⁹ “The Efficacy of Psychotherapy”: retrieved 5/12/09 from APA website: www.apa.org/practice/peff.html

¹⁰ CORE: www.coreims.co.uk/index.php

¹¹ Barkham, M. et al. (2006) Dose-effect relations and responsive regulation of treatment duration: The good enough level. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Vol 74(1), Feb 2006, 160-167.

Stiles, W.B. et al (2008) Responsive regulation of treatment duration in routine practice in United Kingdom primary care settings: Replication in a larger sample. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*. Vol 76(2), Apr 2008, 298-305.

Other than this, there have been two substantive English-language articles on the topic of the present science of body psychotherapy published fairly recently in the last few years (May, 2005; Röhrich, 2009), and there are some other foreign-language articles, but these are less accessible. There was also a chapter on empirical research in the Handbook of Body Psychotherapy in the German edition (Loew & Tritt, 2006), which was rather limited and is hopefully going to be improved in the forthcoming English-American edition.

John May, a clinical psychologist and respected body psychotherapist in St Louis, MO, USA, attempted to survey all empirical studies in peer-reviewed journals on the outcome of body psychotherapy in the English language. He located 6 retrospective studies, 9 efficacy studies and 18 effectiveness studies (with 55 references). “More study is needed and many questions remain unresolved. Nevertheless, a body of literature is slowly developing that offers support for body psychotherapy under some conditions.” (May, 2005, p. 98)

More significantly, May nicely highlights some of the basic dilemmas with respect to “science” in the field of body psychotherapy:

Psychotherapeutic knowing is derived from three sources, which I have described as a three-legged stool. One leg represents knowledge that comes from one’s own inner exploration and work. Direct experiential knowing, sometimes called primordial knowing, plays an important role in this sort of knowledge. Another leg of the stool represents knowledge that comes from experience with clients as one sits with them hour-after-hour. Direct knowing also plays a role here, as do case observations that are not systematically and objectively tested. The third leg of the stool represents objective study. This leg of the stool deemphasizes direct knowing and unsystematic case observation in favor of systematic testing with objective measures.

All three legs are needed, or the stool will not be stable enough to support a large body of theory. Almost all general psychotherapeutic theories derive their inspiration and core insights from the first leg of the stool (see Atwood & Stolorow, 1993). These initial insights are developed and refined through experience with clients. How would empiricists know what hypotheses to test without insights and theories derived from these two sources of knowledge? On the other hand, if one stops here, never proceeding to the systematic testing represented by the third leg, then one is left with something more akin to religious dogma than professionally grounded theory. (Ibid, p. 98)

This is essentially the state of body psychotherapy today: a stool without the third leg ... something more akin to religious dogma ... And we really have only ourselves to blame. No one can, or will, do this sort of work for us. We have to become more objective – of ourselves, about ourselves - and that does not necessarily mean de-humanization. We have to find ways and resources with which to do the research, which probably means the current Somatic Psychology PhD programs and students initially. We also have to change our somewhat blinkered attitudes towards science and research.

With respect to the different “modalities,” out of the thirty-four studies, John May states that Bioenergetics has the most outcomes studies (with eight), and three of these are particularly supportive and strong. Additionally, “Radix, Holotropic Breathwork, Psychomotor Psychotherapy, Gestalt Therapy, Primal Therapy and Rubenfeld Synergy all have more than one outcome study. There are prominent forms of body psychotherapy that have none however. With each passing year, this omission becomes more serious.” (May, 2005, p. 115) This tends to put the weight also on the modalities within body psychotherapy to prove they are considerably better.

There are three main types of study:

- **Retrospective Outcome Studies.**

They are easiest to perform, and “the repeated finding that large percentages of clients are satisfied is very persuasive. In addition, they provide important data about the characteristics of body psychotherapy clients.” (Ibid, p. 115) Any clinic or training institute, or professional associations that encourage their members to send in such data, have the potential to perform such retrospective studies.

- **Effectiveness Studies.**

They measure, using standardized assessment procedures (usually a simple multiple-choice form), the changes between the client when enters therapy and the changes at termination of the therapy. A little bit of rigor in the clinic or the training institute, or from the practitioner, helps to ensure that most clients actually complete a “before” and “after” therapy form.

The Clinical Outcomes for Routine Evaluation (CORE)¹² system is a quite good one to use in this respect. The professional association can help to create an expectation that their practitioners will encourage their clients to fill in such forms and to return them for analysis. Follow-up studies involve sending the same ‘end of therapy’ form to the client about 3 or 6 months later, to see whether any reported benefits have lasted. Again, they are useful, but – by themselves – they are not sufficient.

¹² CORE: www.coreims.co.uk

- **Efficacy Studies**

They are the most complicated (and expensive) and require a high degree of planning and control. They require access to a large source of subjects, with prior information about these subjects, so that homogenous groups (same age, gender, class, etc.) can be “recruited” and then randomly assigned to the different forms of treatment that are being studied. In respect to body psychotherapy, good “comparisons” might be people with the same condition being assigned to Yoga classes, to a “talking” therapy, or to a discussion group. Ideally, some people would receive no treatment by opting out and would later be asked to complete the same outcome forms. Another comparison would be to differentiate between those on medication and those not on medication. It is therefore probably necessary to locate such a study in a large clinic, most definitely with an experienced researcher, to have the study ethically checked out beforehand. It would be necessary to carefully check on how the clients are randomized, and then to check on how the results are being processed and analyzed. “They are the most widely accepted test of whether or not a treatment works, however they are sometimes the only type of study accepted by front-line scientific journals. Thus they may be worth the cost and effort required.” (Ibid, p. 116)

But, again, please note that we are moving away somewhat from the concept of “therapy” to that of “treatment.” This sometimes starts to grate on the sensitivities of practitioners who see themselves becoming somewhat less significant during such a study. Furthermore, as I have said, governmental bodies are only really interested in the treatment of one particular condition: i.e. depression, anxiety, or chronic pain. It is therefore sometimes easier to perform these studies in specialist clinics such as pain clinics or voluntary organizations for people with phobias, depression, eating disorders, etc.

The other wide review of body psychotherapy research (Röhrich, 2009) concludes something quite similar. Frank Röhrich is a consultant psychiatrist, a body psychotherapist, and professor at the University of Hertfordshire, UK. His literature review (80 references) is impressive. He writes:

The heterogeneous field of body oriented psychological [BOP] therapies provides a range of unique contributions for the treatment of mental disorders. Practice based clinical evidence and a few empirical studies point towards good efficacy of so called non-verbal intervention strategies (although this is somehow misleading as all these therapies naturally work with both verbal and non-verbal interventions), particularly relevant for those disorders with body image aberration and other body-related psychopathology. Furthermore, BOP appears to offer promising additional psychotherapeutic tools in areas, where traditional psychotherapies seem to fail so far, i.e. somatoform disorders, eating disorders, psychotic disorders and chronic schizophrenia. (Ibid, p. 20)

However, Röhrich is also appreciative of the German-Swiss study:

Arguably, the most important study concerning the effectiveness of BOP in routine care (outpatient-setting) was conducted from 2002 to 2005 and published recently (Koemeda-Lutz et al. 2006). In this multicentre, naturalistic evaluation study of BOP (eight different schools including: Hakomi, Unitive Body Psychotherapy, Biodynamic Therapy, Bioenergetic Analysis, Client-Centered Verbal and Body Psychotherapy, Integrative Body Psychotherapy, Body-Oriented Psychotherapy and Biosynthesis), the researchers aimed to investigate the effectiveness of routine therapy in outpatient settings. Patients seeking BOP (n=342 participated) were compared to other outpatients (not in RCT fashion). The assessments were carried out at baseline, after 6 months and at the end of therapy (over a maximum of two years). The instrument used to estimate treatment responses was the symptom checklist SCL-90-R. This instrument measures subjectively felt impairment by means of a 90-item self-report inventory of physical and mental symptoms occurring the preceding week. Overall, the results suggest good efficacy of BOP for a variety of symptoms or problem areas. However, the study design does not allow for more substantive statements/conclusions. (Ibid: p.16)

He concludes:

The current evidence base can therefore be summarized as follows: BOP seems to have generally good effects on subjectively experienced depressive and anxiety symptoms, somatization and social insecurity. Patients undergoing BOP appear to benefit in terms of improved general well-being, reduced motor tension and enhanced activity levels. There is evidence from one RCT, that bioenergetic analysis may be specifically effective for somatoform disorder patients and there is substantial evidence for the efficacy of functional relaxation on psychosomatic disorders (asthma, tension headache, and irritable bowel syndrome). Patients suffering from severe physical conditions (e.g. cancer) seem to be responding well to Dance Movement Psychotherapy with regard to enhanced self-esteem, changes in body perception and improved coping mechanism. At least three RCTs have demonstrated that schizophrenia patients with predominant negative symptoms respond to manualised body oriented psychological intervention strategies, improving their psychomotor behavior, social and emotional interaction. ...

The best example for the importance of research efforts in the field is the recent publication of [draft update of the] NICE guidelines for schizophrenia in the UK. Through a robust meta-analytic process, all the available evidence base has been reviewed and body oriented psychotherapy is now recommended amongst other non-verbal/arts therapies as treatment of choice for chronic schizophrenia patients with predominant negative symptoms.

Still, this is also a great start and it has already opened the door to body-oriented therapies being considered as significantly useful by the NICE Guidelines, where one of these studies is already referenced. Röhrich also points to a possible solution to this dilemma about who actually does the research:

One way forward could come from collaboration between the professional associations (e.g. ADMP, USABP, EABP) and the university (Masters & Ph.D.) programs: one providing the source material, through the practitioners' case loads, and the other providing the time and energy from research students with the analytic facilities and desire to publish. (Röhrich, 2010, p. 22)

This makes a lot of sense. The 'scientific committees' of the professional associations could, and probably should, commission research projects, or help design them. With perhaps a little bit of funding as an incentive (as happened in the Koemeda-Lutz study), the university programs could, and probably should, do the collection and number crunching. The field of body psychotherapy is small enough, and skilled enough, to make this sort of collaboration eminently possible, if it were not also so parochial still. However, this brings me to the next major obstacle.

The Lack of Science in Body Psychotherapy

In Europe, most of the current body psychotherapy practitioners have had absolutely no training whatsoever in scientific research from within their modalities. It is mostly excluded from their curriculum because of the now-outmoded emphasis on technique. They may have gotten some grounding in research, if they have done a Masters degree or a PhD in psychology, but this is not necessarily appropriate for psychotherapy or body psychotherapy. Many do not have this academic training. This deficit is becoming quite glaring and this leads to the paucity of any proper research. This includes thinking or writing about research, or encouraging others to do research. As a result, body psychotherapy itself is showing and feeling that deficit.

In America, some of this deficit is carried by the "requirement" that most psychotherapists have to have a Masters or PhD academic degree in order to practice. However, few do any research. Much of the body psychotherapy training is still carried on in small private schools, and the few colleges (like CIIS, JFK (Berkeley), SBGI and Naropa,¹³) are also focused on training and technique, more than on doing and publishing research projects.

Much more familiar is a "scientific" version of case study type of research (Kaplan & Schwartz, 2005). The various body psychotherapy trainings have generally been excellent on the theoretical and the experiential sides, but woefully deficient on the academic and scientific sides. Maybe there is some fear of a dilution of their methodology here. Koemeda-Lutz et al. (2005) are unequivocal about the way forward:

For body psychotherapy schools, this study demonstrates that there is no need to fear comparison using standardized instruments of therapy research. For the future, the task emerges to formulate specific therapeutic goals and to develop suitable measuring instruments. If these were available, the indices for effectiveness discussed here could be augmented by indices that are specific to body psychotherapy. In addition, the disorder-specific effectiveness of body psychotherapy should be investigated. (Ibid, p. 28)

The changes needed here are really to be undertaken by the training schools in the various modalities and the methods of body psychotherapy. Changes also need to be undertaken by the professional associations behind them, like the EABP & USABP, who help coordinate and regulate them. The professional associations need to consider amending the training standards to ensure that science and research modules are included, to ensure that all future body psychotherapy practitioners at least have a basic knowledge and experience in research methodology and academic writing. The training schools need to recognize and promote the value of research to their trainees. There is no other way.

Links also have to be formed with university programs where some of the actual research can be undertaken at, in cooperation with the clinical aspects of the training schools, clinics and groups of body psychotherapists under the auspices of the professional associations. However, I am getting ahead of myself as this moves the argument into the third part in this series.

¹³ CIIS: California Institute of Integral Studies, San Francisco, CA; JFK: John F Kennedy University, Berkeley, CA; SBGI = Santa Barbara Graduate Institute, Santa Barbara, CA; Naropa University, Boulder, CO: currently the four universities in USA that run MA & PhD programs in Somatic Psychology or Body Psychotherapy.

As a conclusion therefore, we can see that applying these principles to some of the English-language studies over the last 10 years¹⁴ have been as follows:

- There have been a couple of examples of the classic gold standard randomized controlled trials: one is the recent study done by Berg et al. (2009), and another is by Röhrich & Priebe (2006) (for abstracts: see Appendix). Though, on deeper reflection, these are quite limited in their numbers and their applications to people with either a general anxiety disorder, or the negative effects in schizophrenia. Furthermore, the latter trial seems to have been using more of a movement-based therapy without verbal process, so whether this can be considered proper body psychotherapy, or not, might be a slightly pedantic, though pertinent, criticism. [We have to be careful how we represent ourselves to the world.¹⁵]
- There was also a controlled outcome study on the effectiveness of psychodynamic body psychotherapy on chronic pain (Monson & Monson, 2000), and a small, randomized proto-study on the effectiveness of functional relaxation with asthmatics (Loew et al, 2001) (also see Appendix 2). However again, on deeper reflection, the controlled outcome study is perhaps only “silver” standard. In addition, functional relaxation is also only considered by some to be an example of proper body psychotherapy, and it was a very small proto-study.
- There have been a couple of other effectiveness studies, but they do not reach the “gold standard” of Randomized Controlled Trials (RCT); the numbers were not really sufficient, nor were they published in a “scientific” journal (Pettinati, 2002) (Sullens, 2002).
- A study from Israel (Peleg et al., 2009) has been made on the effectiveness of Mind Body Therapy (a combination of soft supportive touch, meditation, relaxation, conscious breathing, listening, empathy and positive thinking) on cancer patients receiving medical treatment. Again, whilst this is interesting, is it body psychotherapy? Is it useful? Yet it comes from a body psychotherapy school.

In these ways, we do seem to limit ourselves.

APPENDIX :

Title: Chronic Pain and Psychodynamic Body Therapy: A Controlled Outcome Study.

Authors: Monsen, Kirsti, & Monsen, Jon T.

Journal: Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training. Vol. 37, No. 3, fall 2000, pp. 257-269.

Abstract: Forty patients (aged 29–57 yrs) with pain disorders participated in a controlled study. Half of the patients were treated with psychodynamic body therapy (PBT) for 33 sessions, and the other half received treatment as usual or no treatment. All patients were evaluated before therapy (T1), at the end of therapy (T2), and at a 1-year follow-up (T3) with a visual-analogue-pain scale (subjective experience of pain), symptom checklist, inventory of interpersonal problems, Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory, and the affect-consciousness interview. The study demonstrated that at T2, the pain was significantly reduced in the PBT group compared to the controls, and 50% of the PBT patients reported no pain. The findings further showed a significant and substantial change on level of somatization, depression, anxiety, denial, assertiveness, and social withdrawal, and increased affect consciousness. The results remained stable at T3, and the PBT patients even continued their improvement on some scales during follow-up. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2009 APA, all rights reserved)

Title: Efficacy of “Functional Relaxation” in Comparison to Terbutaline and a “Placebo Relaxation” Method in Patients with Acute Asthma. A Randomized, Prospective, Placebo-controlled Crossover Experimental Investigation.

Authors: Loew, T. H., Tritt, K., Siegfried, W., Bohmann, H., Martus P. & Hahn, E. G.

Journal: Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, Vol. 70, No. 3, pp 151-157.

Abstract: Background: “Functional relaxation” (FR) according to Marianne Fuchs is a body-oriented psychotherapy that involves teaching the patient a type of relaxation techniques aimed at maintaining equilibrium of the nervous system. Methods: In order to determine whether the practice of elementary parts of this therapy has an immediate beneficial effect on pulmonary function, a randomized, single-blind, prospective crossover study was done with 21 asthmatics with acute bronchoconstriction. On 3 consecutive days they were given either (1), a 5-min verbal standard instruction in elementary exercises of FR (eFR), which they were to practice during subsequent bodyplethysmographic measurement, or (2), inhalative terbutaline (IT), a β_2 -sympathomimetic drug, or (3), an unspecific “placebo relaxation” technique (PRT), so that all subjects tried all 3 treatments in random order. Spirometric variables were assessed. Results: There was a significant decrease in specific airway resistance with eFR, which, though not as pronounced as with IT, was significantly greater than with PRT. This study shows that clinically relevant effects can be achieved for patients with asthma through mind-body interaction, which can be triggered by reproducible procedures. Conclusion: Further development of the FR approach could lead to a non-pharmacological and effective supplementary treatment for asthma, which is in high demand by many patients.

Key Words: Asthma, Disease, Symptomatology, Bronchoconstriction, Acute, Treatment, Body psychotherapy Relaxation, Comparative study, Chemotherapy, Terbutaline, Bronchodilator, Agonist, β_2 -Adrenergic receptor, β -Adrenergic receptor agonist, Inhalation, Treatment efficiency, Prospective, Follow-up study, Human, Somatic disease, Respiratory disease, Obstructive pulmonary disease.

(30 refs.)

Title: Affect-focused Body Psychotherapy in Patients with Generalized Anxiety Disorder: Evaluation of an Integrative Method

Authors: Berg, Adrienne Levy; Sandell, Rolf & Sandahi, Christer: Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden. Contact: adrienne.levy-berg@karolinska.se

Journal: Journal of Psychotherapy Integration, 19(1), March 2009, p. 67-85.

¹⁴ My apologies to the researchers of projects that have only been published in a non-English language. Whilst I would hope to be able to appreciate the valuable work you may have done, it cannot be known about, appreciated and spread more widely if you do not take the time and effort to translate (at least) the title, abstract and key-words into English. The EABP website will always publish these.

¹⁵ I am grateful to Laura Steckler for her comments in a private e-mail for the basis of this critique.

Abstract: The aim of this study was to explore the long-term effects of affect-focused body psychotherapy (ABP) for patients with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD). A group of 61 consecutive patients, 21-55 years old, were randomized to ABP and psychiatric treatment as usual (TAU). The patients were assessed before treatment and followed up 1 and 2 years after inclusion. The ABP patients received one session of treatment per week during one year. Three self-report questionnaires were administered: Symptom Checklist-90, Beck Anxiety Inventory, and the WHO (Ten) Well-Being Index. In both groups, there were significant improvements. On termination, the ABP group had improved significantly more on the SCL-90 Global Symptom Index than the TAU group, whereas the differences were short of significance on the other two scales. The integration of bodily techniques with a focus on affects in a psycho dynamically informed treatment seems to be a viable treatment alternative for patients with GAD.

Keywords: Affects, Body Psychotherapy, Outcome, Physiotherapy, Randomized Trial.
(66 refs, Appendix)

Title: Effect of body-oriented psychological therapy on negative symptoms in schizophrenia: a randomized controlled trial

Authors: Röhricht, Frank & Priebe, Stefan

Contact: Dr Frank Röhricht, Academic Unit, Newham Centre for Mental Health, London E13 8SP, UK. Frank.Rohricht@elcmht.nhs.uk

Journal: Psychological Medicine, Volume 36 (5) May 2006, pp. 669-678.

Abstract:

Background: In order to improve the treatment of medication-resistant negative symptoms in schizophrenia, new interventions are needed. Neuropsychological considerations and older reports in the literature point towards a potential benefit of body-oriented psychological therapy (BPT). This is the first randomized controlled trial specifically designed to test the effectiveness of manualized BPT on negative symptoms in chronic schizophrenia.

Method: Outpatients with DSM-IV continuous schizophrenia were randomly allocated to either BPT (n = 24) or supportive counseling (SC, n = 21). Both therapies were administered in small groups in addition to treatment as usual (20 sessions over 10 weeks). Changes in negative symptom scores on the Positive and Negative Symptom Scale (PANSS) between baseline, post-treatment and 4-month follow-up were taken as primary outcome criteria in an intention-to-treat analysis.

Results: Patients receiving BPT attended more sessions and had significantly lower negative symptom scores after treatment (PANSS negative, blunted affect, motor retardation). The differences held true at 4-month follow-up. Other aspects of psychopathology and subjective quality of life did not change significantly in either group. Treatment satisfaction and ratings of the therapeutic relationship were similar in both groups.

Conclusions: BPT may be an effective treatment for negative symptoms in patients with chronic schizophrenia. The findings should merit further trials with larger sample sizes and detailed studies to explore the therapeutic mechanisms involved.

(42 refs.)

Title: Effectiveness of Body Mind Therapy of Cancer Patients Receiving Chemical Treatment.

Authors: Dr. Irit Peleg, Dr. Joseph Brenner, Dr. Moti Shimonov, Ofra Ravinda, Dafna Karata Shwartz.

Contact: Dr Irit Peleg, Reidman International College, 26 HAim levanon St., Tel Aviv, 63507 Israel. pelegirit@gmail.com

Abstract:

The difficulties of coping with the crisis caused by implications of the discovery and the treatment of cancer induce a sense of mental and physical distress that influences the patient's quality of life. Body-mind therapies in the framework of integrative medicine have, in recent years, become an inseparable part of the physical and mental treatments used by patients. There is considerable research evidence of the effectiveness of these treatments for cancer patients.

The research objective is to examine the effectiveness of body-mind therapy on cancer patients who are receiving chemical treatment. The research method: 24 cancer patients were sampled, some of whom received body-mind therapies and some who constituted the control group. The research process: research data were collected using a structured independently completed questionnaire that was validated. The results: four interactions were found according to group and timing, in which an improvement was found after the therapy among the experiment subjects as opposed to the control group.

In the area of psychological variables, in the experimental group before the therapy there were more physiological changes before the therapy (M=4.65) than after the therapy (M=3.97). This measure examined the degree of tiredness, appetite, pains, sleep changes, constipation, nausea, changes in monthly menstruation, general state of health, and changes in the outer appearance.

In the area of variables in the economic situation and family situation, before the intervention there were more changes for the worse among the subjects in the experimental group (M=4.92) than among the subjects of the control group (M=2.55), while after the intervention there were no differences between the groups. This index examined the extent to which the disease bothered the family members, whether the support is adequate, and the extent to which the disease disrupted the employment and caused an economic burden.

In the area of changes for the worse in behavior, before the intervention there were more changes for the worse among the subjects in the experimental group (M=4.81) than among the subjects in the control group (M=3.36), while after the intervention there were no differences between the groups. This index examined the extent to which the patient is troubled by the first diagnosis, how the disease influences anxiety and depression, and concerns and fears of future diagnoses, fear of additional cancer, metastasis, and fear of the future.

In the area of negative changes following the disease, before the intervention there were more changes for the worse among the subjects of the experimental group (M=4.91) than among the subjects of the control group (M=3.98), while after the intervention there were no differences between the groups. This index is comprised of a mean of five indices: psychological changes related to the disease, changes in the economic situation and situations in the family, changes for the worse in the sexuality and social relations, changes for the worse in behavior, and changes and concerns related to the disease.

As the cancer patient receives more body-mind therapies, his physical and emotional immune system is strengthened (2.3), his ability to cope with crisis increases (4), his tension and anxiety are reduced (5.6), his level of tiredness is lowered (6.7), he acquires knowledge to relax the body and enable it to strengthen itself, and the ability to recover vitality, essentialness. The general quality of life increases (8). As the patient adopts positive thinking on life in general and on his personal situation in particular, the changes of his recovery will increase (9) and his relations with his significant other and his friends will improve (10).

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Biography

Courtenay Young trained in (unscientific) body psychotherapy about 30 years ago, and has since been working as a psychotherapist. He has been a significant member of the European Association for Body Psychotherapy (EABP) (former General Secretary and past-President of EABP) and has represented EABP at numerous conferences and meetings, on both the eastern and western coasts, over the last 15 years. He helped establish body psychotherapy as a scientifically validated psychotherapy with the European Association for Psychotherapy (EAP). He is a founding member of USABP, and compiles the EABP Bibliography of Body Psychotherapy (on CD-ROM and now on-line). He has now largely stepped out of political work and currently works as a psychotherapist and counselor in and around Edinburgh, Scotland. He helps edit two psychotherapy journals, and has just completed a book: "*Help Yourself Towards Mental Health*" (Karnac, 2010). He has also just started to help edit the English-American edition of the massive "*Handbook of Body Psychotherapy*" (edited by Gustl Marlock & Halko Weiss: published 2006, Schattauer, in German). He has written several journal articles and chapters in books about body psychotherapy, as well as about psychotherapy in general. He can be contacted by e-mail: courtenay@courtenay-young.com

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How does material in this manuscript inform the field and add to the body of knowledge? If it is a description of what we already know, is there some unique nugget or gem the reader can store away or hold onto? If it is a case study, is there a balance among the elements, i.e. back ground information, description of prescribed interventions and how they work, outcomes that add to our body of knowledge? If this is a reflective piece, does it tie together elements in the field to create a new perspective? Given that the field does not easily lend itself to controlled studies and statistics, if the manuscript submitted presents such, is the analysis forced or is it something other than it purports to be?

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