**Interconnectedness vs. Individualism**

This is a complementary paper expanding on our group work (*Mental Health Care - A global perspective on depression*) with a focus on three different papers with analyses and reflections, then I go further with a personal synthesis of solutions and lastly I end the paper with some provoking thoughts…

**Antonioli C. and Reveley M. "Randomised controlled trial of animal facilitated therapy with dolphins in the treatment of depression," BMJ; Nov. 26, 2005; vol. 331; p. 1231-1234**

A very interesting research paper that shows the improvement of mildly to moderately depressed people when treated with animal facilitated therapy in this case with dolphins in accordance with the *biophilia hypothesis* “The *biophilia hypothesis* suggests that there is an instinctive bond between human beings and other living systems”. Of course many people believe that close interactions with nature and animals may be very positive for anyone (maybe not with cockroaches), but so far the amount of randomized controlled studies with decent quality has been very low although it is increasing. In this study it was a combination of nature and dolphins.

Some weaknesses of this study maybe the recruitment of the participants, where they a special kind of group that answers this kind of tests ? And the low number of participants, I am also curious why two people quit the study ? Good that they where told to not expect any improvement. The participants seemed to be diagnosed by many different medical practitioners that could be a weakness since they may have different concepts of what depression is.

The control group had to swim and snorkel in the barrier coral reef, but isn’t that also a form of animal or fish interaction, and what about the multitudes of colors and beauty ? It’s no surprise that they also felt improved of this quite massive neurological input or massage. In the discussion they talk about the possible effects of the echolocation system which is a really important aspect to explore deeper. Because when you are in a city you are surrounded by artificial sounds and when you are in a rainforest you are surrounded by natural sounds. How do they affect the human body and mind ? Wouldn’t it be a logical assumption that sound can both heal and kill or damage a human mind or body (acoustic pollution or acoustic support) ?

Even though the aim of science is to find or prove the effectiveness of some kind of specific treatment, in this study we have many obvious different parameters, new exotic environment ? dolphins, water, sounds, beauty and maybe new people. The adventure aspect is also a factor to think about, because many depressed may be under stimulated or bored by their present life or environment. Of course I personally believe that this form of therapy or stimulation could be very beneficial and if my doctor would prescribe a recipe with dolphin therapy in Honduras I would be queuing outside my Doctors office at this very moment and then tell him that I feel mildly or moderately depressed.

Maybe we have many different forms of “self-medication” or “self therapy” to prevent depression, e.g when young girls have horses or when couples buy dogs when their children move out.

I think that the biggest impact or value of this study is to point at a more holistic approach either to improve the health care system or the home care system (environment) maybe as simple as the value of having animals, plants or beauty at your home. Maybe that’s what the Chinese people knew all along when they use their *Feng Shui* system to plan their interior and exterior design. It is difficult to view this paper from a strict nursing perspective since it is not really consciously integrated into our health care system at this moment in time. Maybe our future hospitals will take this in more account ?

From a ethical standpoint it was very fair that all participants had the opportunity to interact with the dolphins, applauds.

Once when I was on a journey in the Azores I walked by a school, at first I didn’t realize that it was a school because it was so beautiful, it looked like a paradise garden with an abundance of flowers in thousands of different colors. Then came my spontaneous thought “what kind of kids will this create” ? Maybe my serotonin level hit the roof then, but unfortunately I cant scientifically prove that today/;)

[**Vythilingam M, Heim C, Newport J, Miller AH, Anderson E, Bronen R, Brummer M, Staib L, Vermetten E, Charney DS, Nemeroff CB, Bremner JD.**](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/entrez/query.fcgi?db=pubmed&cmd=Retrieve&dopt=AbstractPlus&list_uids=12450959&query_hl=1&itool=pubmed_DocSum) **Childhood trauma associated with smaller hippocampal volume in women with major depression. Am J Psychiatry. 2002 Dec;159(12):2072-80.**

This research paper are locking for possible connections with early childhood traumas, the hippocampal volume and depression. Severe stress early in life has been associated with smaller hippocampal volume and persistent change in the hypothalamic-adrenal axis (can’t help thinking about trees and the different sizes of the rings depending on how good the year was). In this paper they compared the measured hippocampus volume in depressed women with and without a history of child abuse. The findings showed that a smaller hippocampal volume was observed exclusively in those that had been subjected to a severe or prolonged history of child abuse. Maybe some inconsistencies in former studies could be explained by unreported history of child abuse from the participants ?

The problem in this study maybe the concept of abuse, there are many kinds of abuse and during short or prolonged time periods. And people deal with it differently (coping strategies) and what is the definition of early childhood ? There is also knowledge that says if something happens before the age of three you are unable to speak about it because your brain worked differently at that age more with pictures and emotions. The worst kind of traumas may be those that are totally suppressed so not even the abused person will know about it on a conscious level (often cases of sexual abuse), but the body will scream out the message for everyone that can see and have ears to hear. It is also said that those people with so called multiple personalities have experienced an extreme trauma before they split their mind. They may have the choice that either they die from extreme trauma or they split the personality to survive, like an extreme kind of survival mechanism. From my own experience in mental health care I noticed four different patients or causes, those that had some form of birth defects (expressed on many different levels), those that had experienced some form of abuse (often there would be nothing in their journals about it) and those that had existential problems (often to strict or conflicting religious ideas but that wasn’t either in the journals) and lastly those that where to open for different realities and who couldn’t handle it (meaning seeing things and hearing voices that most people cant affirm or accept) but this was often in their journals with the assumption that they where really, fucked up !

So this paper makes a very important contribution to the possible long term effects of a rough childhood. So how do we treat that ?

Basically it is best to prevent it by creating good and supporting families and also have a society that honours QOL from birth to grown up, sorry, of course it should start even before the child is born with both parents. There is actually research showing that the level of oxytocin that is released during the first five days after birth, has major impact for the rest of the life. It will create a basic level of fear and security. This in turn will affect the ability for social interactions, closeness and the interest to explore the surrounding environment. That’s why it is so important to hug and cuddle your children often. Of course it has to be a loving touch.

It is never too late to have a good childhood if you believe that you can meet and release childhood traumas and that’s what really great healers do, when the individual feels secure enough and there is an openness for it.

**Walsh, S. P. & Kling, M. A. (2004) VNS and depression: Current status and future directions. Future Drugs, 1, 155-160.**

Its a review paper that shows the potential of non pharmacological treatment of TRD (Treatment Resistant Depression). In the form of VNS (Vagus Nerve Stimulation) which the neuroscientists have used for treatment to reduce the seizures of epileptically patients since 1997. The mechanisms of how it really works are uncertain at the moment. The treatment with depression also affects the sleeps macro architecture. The most common side effects where voice alteration and coughing. It seemed to have best effect with long term treatment. Some negative predictive factors, meaning those that didn’t seem to respond so well also had a history of less effect with ECT (Electro Convulsive Therapy) or extensive medication, therapy resistant patients ? There seem to be three different complications of this treatment, 1) related to surgical implantation, 2) vocal cord paralysis and unilateral facial weakness, 3) intraoperative transient ventricular asystole (10-20 sec). Conclusion: pilot data suggests VNS has antidepressive effects, but little is known about the long term effects of this treatment. Nothing in the review is written about the risk of over stimulation or misuse of the device.

According to the company behind the implant (Cyberonics) more than 40,000 patients worldwide has been treated with VNS therapy until 1 of May 2006. In July 2005 it was approved by FDA for treatment of depression. Critics claims that it was approved to easily and question the effects of it, but the reason that it was approved so easily may be that it is not a medicine but a technical product which doesn’t demand as extensive research as medical products. You can wonder why there is no discussion of it in the media ? (at least I haven’t heard anything about it). Maybe some medical companies sees this device as a threat ?

What can we learn from this paper ? Maybe there is a clue in this paper ? There may be positive things about stimulation, but do we really need it directly in our brains or could we get it in a more natural way ? Stimulating our selves with smells, colors, exercise, differences in food, differences in temperatures, different sounds, different people, different scenery, different work, different vacation, different habits, different thinking, maybe facing more challenges, maybe more play and adventures and more brainstorming, doesn’t that word give a clue in it self ? Maybe we all need some kind of stimulation to keep us awake and not just alive. Have you seen animals at the zoo ? Hmm do I have to state my point clearer ?

Or is it time to enter the *cyborg society* where all depression is seen as a disease that you just digitally and artificially override, instead of seeing the depression as a positive emotion for potential growth. Maybe it is time to make changes in your life instead ? Maybe you have a soul that tells you through your emotions that it is time to move on for a new adventure doing something more exciting ?

**Possible solutions on an individual level to “cure” depression**

Firstly start with the physical level, why do we tend to forget this ? (regular routines, sleep, nutrition, water and exercise) I still haven’t seen any hospital that uses the latest research in nutritional therapy. Then when there is some balance you can go on to psychological treatment with focus on the clients relations and network, we often miss the impact of close relations and families, sometimes a child can express symptoms for a dysfunctional family. After that we can focus on victim mentality vs. empowerment to see what goals the individual has and how they express their creative energy in their daily lives and what kind of self-limiting concepts they use and how they can change them. Later when they are ready for it, we can give them *life coaching* to help them to create an overall balance in their life e.g enough of security vs. challenges or stimulation. And lastly the most important thing for those that are ready to take full responsibility of their own health (internal health locus of control) they can have healing session to help them to release emotional traumas and raising their consciousness about semiconscious or subconscious life choices and beliefs. Helping them to face difficult emotions and understand where they came from. And also learning them to understand the value of all kinds of emotions and learn to feel them instead of suppressing them to a subconscious level again which will affect the body in a physical way..

PS: I know that CBT (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy) often is praised, but from my perspective it is a very superficial approach, it often divert and inhibit true and lasting healing, because it is more concern with the mental level then core emotional issues, of course it can give some temporary relief and has the value of enlighten the individual of the impact of their own thoughts.

**Possible solutions on a global level to “cure” depression.**

Then I think we shall focus on our planetary collective structures both external and internal, of course the external is a mirror for the internal collective mind patterns. And it is only natural to understand that if we have a pathological society or culture soon the people will start to show symptoms of disease or maybe I should call it dis-ease ?

But at this time it is not possible to compare our civilisation with other civilisations to learn more, since this information is ridiculed and suppressed by the “*puppet masters*” of this planet. I will not go deeper into that now, that’s another paper !

We as a collective have choices that we can make about our future planet, but its made on a individual basis, so that’s why YOU and your daily choices are so important although YOU may not have realised your own full power yet ?

**Is the choice between homo roboticus vs. homo holisticus ???**

Of course you decide, not your so called politicians, unless you think so, but that is also a choice 

Now I have to leave for my next adventure, maybe to South Africa to explore the herb *suderlandia fructosate* and see if it has any potential to cure AIDS.

Hakuna Matata

Ragnar Asker

**Utopia or Dystopia**

**???**

Tursiops Truncatus Tursiops Truncatus



Multiple Personality



Cyborg