

# Asthma – National Study

The Bowen Technique National Asthma Study

December 2002 to March 2004

Organised by Nikke Ariff in collaboration with B.T.E.R.

## Aim:

The National Research program was launched to determine the efficacy of The Bowen Technique in the treatment of the Asthma condition. The research was aiming to record any changes in their pattern Volunteer's symptoms in terms of:

- frequency
  - severity of attacks
  - and reliance on medication
- over a period of 12 months whilst receiving Bowen treatments.

## Selection of candidates: The Volunteer Group

The parameters set were as follows:

- the volunteers had to be over 16 years of age
- they must not have been hospitalised for their condition
- they must have been diagnosed as an Asthma sufferer by a Gp or hospital specialist
- Asthma must be their main health concern

## The Volunteer Group: Profile

Of the 24 Volunteers: 16 women, 8 men

Length of time diagnosed as an Asthma sufferer:

- 1 to 5 yrs : 2 (8%) volunteers
- 5 to 10 yrs : 8 (33%) volunteers
- 10 to 15 yrs : 3 (13%) volunteers
- 15 yrs plus : 11 (46%) volunteers

## The Therapists

All were fully qualified in the Bowen technique and fulfilled the qualifications set out by the governing body The Bowen Therapists European Register ([www.bter.org](http://www.bter.org) email: [info@bter.org](mailto:info@bter.org)).

The Research Program:

The Program was carried out over a 12-month period. No treatment protocol was set for the Bowen therapist to follow. This is because Bowen is a holistic therapy and it was felt that the Bowen therapist should not be compromised in having to treat according to a set protocol as opposed to treating the Volunteer as a unique individual. The Asthma Volunteer kept a weekly diary throughout the 12 month period additionally, a diary was completed for every Asthma attack experienced during the Research Period.

## Results of the Bowen Technique National Asthma Study

Of the 24 participants who completed the 12 month program:

All 24 volunteers reported that Bowen had made a positive difference to their asthma condition.

- 7 registered "My asthma has improved dramatically"
- 14 reported " My asthma has improved substantially"
- 3 reported " My asthma has improved slightly"

- 20 (83%) reported a reduction in the frequency of their asthma attacks
- 18 (75%) reported a reduction in the severity of their attacks
- 18 (75%) reported they were now using less medication than before starting the Bowen Research project
- 14 (58%) reported they were responding better to their medication
- 17 (71%) volunteers reported their sensitivity to triggers had reduced

Although only 15 of the 24 volunteers used Peak Flow meters at home, all 15 (100%) of them reported their readings had improved.

Volunteers rated their asthma condition on a scale of 0 to 10:

Before Bowen treatments were received:

- Mild : 3 (12.5%)
- Moderate : 12 (50%)
- Severe : 9 (37.5%)

After 12 months on the Research Program:  
Mild : 18 (75%)  
Moderate : 6 (25%)

Total number of Asthma attacks:  
The total number of Asthma attacks reported showed a dramatic improvement in the second 6 months on the research program:

First 6 months : Total of 84 Asthma attacks recorded  
Second 6 months: Total of 26 Asthma attacks recorded  
This represents an improvement of 69% in the number of asthma attacks over the first 6 months.

Other Benefits:  
Of the 24 Volunteers who completed the program, 22 reported that secondary health concerns had also improved within the 12-month Research period underlining the holistic nature of the Bowen Technique. These issues included:  
Positive responses  
Back, Neck & Shoulder problems: 15  
Knee problems & Other joint problems: 4  
Headaches & Migraine: 3  
Hayfever: 8  
Irritable Bowel Syndrome & Digestion: 4  
PMT & Circulation: 2  
Insomnia: 4  
Anxiety, Stress & Depression: 13  
Energy levels: 8

## ADDITIONAL BENEFITS – Volunteer quotes:

"The improvement to my back and knee problems have been excellent as I've not had to take as many painkillers as I have had to in previous years."

"I have been able to go back to activities which I had almost totally abandoned last year at this time because of illness and fear..... One of the major benefits for me has been the dramatic reduction in migraine attacks. Attacks are totally debilitating for up to 3 or 4 days. I feel I have more of my life back. "

Some quotes from the Asthma Volunteers:

"Asthma stopped me taking vigorous exercise – I can now."

"I never expected Bowen to have much effect, being a natural sceptic, but am happy to have been proved wrong! Now feeling extremely positive and I hopefully, will feel able to leave my inhaler at home in future."

"Before treatment, my inhaler had to go everywhere with me, even in the house – and I needed a steroid inhaler as well. Now, I ignore the inhaler (broncodilator) in the house. Also steroid now not needed."

" Regained self confidence, take less medication and do not rely on medications taken "just in case" or panic if the inhaler is not within reach".

"This treatment has changed my life. I was constantly having severe attacks and now I hardly ever use my Ventolin Inhaler. "

" I would not have believed that my asthma could be improved so much by a holistic therapy. I will certainly carry on having treatments."

"I can now run around after my nephews and nieces, as before I would worry about having an asthma attack."

" My overall feeling of well being has greatly improved. Prior to Bowen, I never ever felt 100% – I was operating in a routine below par."

"My outlook has always been positive, so to be able to get back to a reasonable normality is great."

The Bowen technique:

Bowen is a gentle, non-invasive, 'hands-on' therapy. It treats the body as a single integrated system and is therefore suitable for all ages from newborn babies to the very elderly, from the fit and active to the critically ill. The practitioner uses thumbs and fingers on precise points around the body to make rolling type movements. The pressure used is light, never more than what your eyeball could comfortably bear. It is a distinctive feature of Bowen that after a sequence of moves, the practitioner leaves the room for a minimum of two minutes to allow the body to respond to and process the moves.

## Mind Body Positive Ltd

Following the results, Nikke Ariff of Mind Body Positive Ltd concluded:

"The Asthma Research is my second project and my thanks and appreciation go to the Volunteer Asthma sufferers and the dedicated Bowen Therapists who took part over this 12 month programme. Asthma is a very individual condition, and a holistic therapy such as Bowen is ideally designed to address the individual according to his or her individual health needs.

I am very pleased with the results of the National Research Programme, which has recorded positive results for all 24 of the Asthma Volunteers. I trust that more people will be encouraged to approach complementary therapies with an open mind for the regular maintenance of their health and well being."

Dr Claire Pickin, Warwickshire GP:

"I am pleased though not surprised to see the patients in this trial benefiting from the Bowen Technique. I use the Bowen Technique frequently in my GP practice, mainly for musculoskeletal problems, but notice that patients' general health improves as well.

"Asthma is a cause of much morbidity and sadly, still mortality, in this country. Its incidence has increased by 250% in the last 20 years and the latest figures show 1 child in 8 is being treated for asthma. The fact that such a simple, gentle, non-invasive technique can reduce the distressing symptoms of asthma deserves attention. The results of the trial are impressive.

"Asthma can be life threatening, so it is important that medication is not stopped suddenly. Bowen Therapists European Register code of practice states that the therapist will never advise patients to alter prescribed medication without first consulting with their doctor. A doctor will be happy to reduce medication gradually as symptoms improve in the long term."

## Conclusion:

The results are very positive, evidenced also by the fact that every Volunteer replied they would recommend the Bowen Technique to fellow Asthma sufferers. Bowen addresses the individual as an integrated biodynamic system as opposed to his or her isolated ailment. The Asthma condition has a myriad of triggers ranging from emotional trauma, stress levels of the individual, exercise, food and environmental allergens. These factors are so varied, that a holistic therapy like Bowen should be considered as a valid option for the health of an Asthma sufferer.

Clearly this is the result of only 24 volunteers, but the overwhelming positive results are very encouraging.

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