

Multiple Sclerosis

by Janie Godfrey

Bowen practitioner Lesley Coombes believes that multiple sclerosis patients receive a number of benefits from Bowen Technique treatment. She herself has MS and in her own experience, Bowen assists with muscle spasm problems, fatigue and in the bowel/bladder problems that are common not only in those who are incapacitated, i.e., wheel chair bound. Both bladder and bowel incontinence are also common in those who have the relapsing-remitting form of MS and Bowen can assist with both the frequency and urge forms of this, using the relevant lower back Bowen procedures. This can mean the difference between waking several times throughout the night (thereby upsetting sleep.....essential for repair) and sleeping straight through the night.

Bowen seems to be very helpful for MS patients who have considerable pain and periods of disability as in the relapsing-remitting form of the disease. Confused nerve signals are going to what isn't working and Lesley believes that Bowen's effect on the nervous system puts it back on as even a keel as possible more quickly than the body could if left to its own devices. For those that are recovering from a relapse and the nerve damage /incapacitation that results, Lesley strongly feels that the Bowen moves can open up neural pathways that have been closed down by a pain response and inflammation and it thereby aids the speed of recovery.

The Bowen Technique is known to help boost the immune system in people who are prone to frequent colds and illness. The leading theory about the cause of MS is that it is an autoimmune disease. So Bowen may well help the body to bring more balance to an overactive immune system and thereby cut down the frequency, potency or damage of MS attacks.

Case History: Primary progressive MS

woman mid 30's with 3 boys – given 2 years to live (summer 02)

E.C.B.S. teacher and Bowen therapist Joy West first saw Mary after her diagnosis and at that stage she was unable to walk unaided, had practically lost her speech and had no upper body strength. Mary did not wish to take the prescribed medication but instead chose to go on a gluten and dairy free diet.

Joy sent her for an assessment and treatment at an immunological/wellness clinic in the Czech Republic and she started an intensive programme of nutritional support

Joy saw her again after two months and then began weekly treatments with Bowen. While she was already beginning to show some signs of improvement, with the addition of the Bowen treatments there was rapid improvement in all areas.

When Mary first came, she had to check where her feet were visually to get them over the end of the bed but by the third treatment, she could get on the bed and know where her feet were through the normal functioning of positional body knowledge. Her speech had come back and was fluent with only the occasional missed word – usually speech is the most difficult thing to get back. After three Bowen treatments, she was able to walk unaided and had begun to play the piano again. Thereafter, she was able to come to her appointments without a carer to help her (although she is always driven by someone else, as she is not safe to drive yet).

Mary's consultant is completely bemused: his first thought was that there had been a misdiagnosis, but they reviewed all the scans and it is certain that she was not misdiagnosed, as the lesions are clear on the original scans. Mary has not had a recent scan to see if these have changed. The consultant's advice to Mary was: "I don't know what you are doing, but keep on doing it".

Mary's improvement has been remarkable and she is particularly aware of this when she goes to the physio clinic for exercises and sees other MS patients deteriorating. For her, the combination of a change in her diet coupled with regular Bowen treatment has made an enormous difference to the progression of the MS.

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