

The Bowen Technique

Knock on effects of pain relief

by Janie Godfrey

The effects of sorting out one physical problem can often have other happy consequences in a person's state of health and well being. This was illustrated very well in the case of Mr A., a 64-year-old retired farmer, who I treated recently.

History: arthritis diagnosed in spine in 1995 after a history of back pain due to hard work and jarring jumps onto concrete.

April 1998: operation to relieve 'gaspably awful pain' in back and to correct spinal stenosis.

Dec 2000: second operation for pain to try to relieve 'awkward' scar tissue from first operation.

2003: in hospital for 8 - 9 weeks with pain - doctors wouldn't operate again, and he was put on epidural injection as maintenance but this has 'been awful' since.

December 2005. His last epidural was apparently improperly administered and they 'touched a membrane'. The Hospital, clearly worried that something was amiss, rang him every day to see if he was all right, but he was not: he was sweating, was not mentally 'with it', wasn't eating. His wife rang the Pain Clinic to inform them. No treatment or admission to hospital was offered to him. His reaction went on for 10 days before it cleared. He has not had any epidurals since.

March 2006: he 'fell in a heap' with severe pain and a doctor did a house call. Diagnosed sciatica. He was sent to a physio and this eased the extreme pain a bit but he still felt very uncomfortable and inflexible. Also, his right knee had felt weak since his collapse. Also, his perception of his right knee is that it is stone cold, although it feels warm to the external touch.

6 April 06: came for first Bowen treatment. Chief complaint was pain in both legs - burning sensation and cramp. Also severe and restricting back pain.

Mr A. is on the following medications to control pain:

Diclofenac - 1 x day

Cocodamol - as needed for pain

Nortriptyline 10mg - 6 x night

Dihydrocodeine 90mg - 2 x day

Oramorph 10 mg - as needed for pain

He also takes:

Seratide - morning & evening for asthma

Salbutamol - as needed for asthma

Ramipril - 1x day for high blood pressure

Tamuloson Hydrochloride 1xday to stimulate urination

Immediately after his first Bowen treatment, he was amazed how much looser he felt, much more flexible. As he stood up after treatment, he leaned over to pull his shoes closer to him, using his hand. Then he realised that he hadn't done that in a very long time as he would 'normally' have used his stick to move his shoes closer because he was too stiff and in too much pain to actually bend over. But now, he had actually leaned over automatically, without thinking, and it hadn't hurt him - he was astonished.

13 April 2006: one week later, he came for his second Bowen treatment. He reported that the intervening week had been 'brilliant'. He had had only one day with pain in his right knee, for no obvious reason, and it was gone the next day. He was no longer experiencing the burning pains and cramping in his legs and was feeling as if he had a whole new lease on life.

28 April 2006: because he was doing so well, the third Bowen treatment took place after a fortnight's break. He reported that he had continued to be absolutely fine over the fortnight. He had just experienced an occasional twinge when standing up after sitting. He also reported stiffness in his legs upon arising in the mornings but it wears off quickly as he moves about. Right knee still feels weak and he perceives it as cold, but this is now a minor irritation because he is so much improved otherwise.

18 May 2006: after a break of three weeks, he reported that he has not been bad at all. He had only one day with any real pain, again in his right knee, and he couldn't put any pressure on it for a day. He had run out of dihydrocodeine a week or so before and had decided to stay off of it. But he feared that his right knee pain might have been because of coming off of it so suddenly, so he got some more and would now try to come off of it very slowly, decreasing the amount bit by bit. He also reported that he had completely come off the oramorph, the diclofenac and the cocodamol and he had cut the nortriptyline from 6 per night to 3 per night.

In addition to the greater mobility and freedom from constant pain that Mr A has enjoyed, the effect of coming off of all of his pain medication has been relief from long-standing and very uncomfortable constipation. He is thrilled with this unexpected bonus and, of course, it makes a big difference to his daily life.

As I write, in October 2006, Mr A. continues to be free of his back and leg pain. He has been off the dihydrocodeine now for some months and is fine without it. He enjoys Bowen treatment for the relaxation it gives and for this reason, as well as a preventive, he continues to have a treatment every 5 - 8 weeks.

Janie Godfrey is a Bowen Technique practitioner in Frome and has been in practice since 1998.

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Janie Godfrey

CertECBS VTCT MBTER NHS Directory of Comp. Therapists

01373 451 558

godfreyjam@btinternet.com

www.JanieGodfrey.co.uk