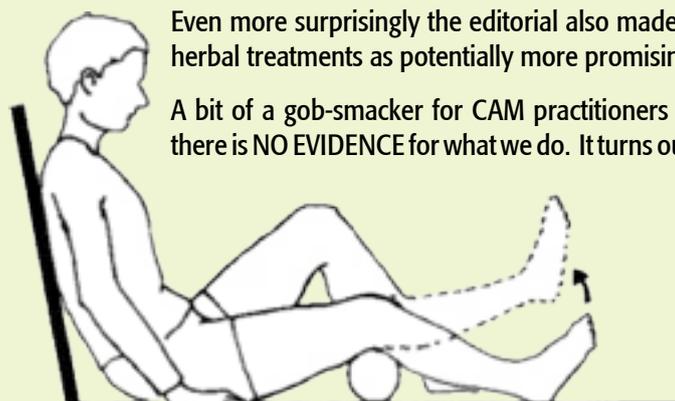


Making headlines in March 2016 was a report published in the Lancet (*Da Costa BR et al*) about a large meta analysis of NSAID's for osteoarthritis. Researchers found that paracetamol did not give any demonstrable benefit at any dose.

A group of researchers led by Sven Trelle from the clinical trials unit of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Bern and Bern University Hospital (CTU Bern) as well as from the Institute of Social and Preventive Medicine at the University of Bern reported that paracetamol "does not meet the minimum standard of clinical effectiveness in reducing pain or improving physical function in patients with knee and hip osteoarthritis". The study is the largest analysis of randomised trials of medical pain relief for osteoarthritis to date pooling data from 74 randomised trials published between 1980 and 2015 and a total of 58,556 patients.

According to Prof Moore and company, while "Paracetamol has been on the market for as long as most of us remember... its efficacy has never been properly established or quantified in chronic diseases, and is probably not as great as many would believe. Its safety is also questioned, not just in overdose".



Even more surprisingly the editorial also made reference to nutritional and herbal treatments as potentially more promising and safer modalities!

A bit of a gob-smacker for CAM practitioners who are ALWAYS being told there is NO EVIDENCE for what we do. It turns out that paracetamol has never been properly studied, let alone proved effective for the use NHS guidelines recommend (courtesy of NICE, the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence).

Martin S, CAM-Mag, p3,5 & 14. April 2016.

Disclaimer - The information in this newsletter is provided for general information purposes only and should not be relied upon as a substitute for sound professional medical advice from a qualified healthcare practitioner.

## Yoga and compassion meditation programme reduces stress in familial caregivers of Alzheimer's disease patients

Family caregivers of patients with Alzheimer's disease very often show signs of reduced quality of life and an increase in stress levels.

This study demonstrated how an 8-week yoga and compassion meditation programme might affect the perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and salivary cortisol levels in family caregivers. A total of 46 volunteers were randomly assigned to participate in either a stress-reduction programme for a 2 month period or an untreated control group for the same period of time.

The levels of anxiety, stress, depression, and morning salivary cortisol of the participants was measured before and after intervention. The Yoga and Compassion Meditation participating group exhibited a reduction of stress, anxiety and depression levels, as well as a reduction in the concentration of salivary cortisol. This suggests that an 8-week yoga and compassion meditation programme may offer an affective intervention for reducing perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and salivary cortisol in family caregivers

Danucalov MA et al, Evid Based Complement Alternat Med. Epub 2013 Apr 18

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## Music Therapy in Palliative Care

A recent randomised controlled trial by Marco Warth et al, in Deutsches Arzteblatt International, analysed the effect (or should that be affect) of music therapy on palliative care patients. The authors concluded that music therapy can enhance terminally ill patients' wellbeing and relaxation.

This treatment has been known since the 1970's but there is however little scientific research on the subject matter. The trial recruited 84 patients in palliative care; one group received passive music therapy with breathing exercises and vocal improvisation. These were accompanied by a monochord, a specially developed wooden instrument with an atmospheric, overtone-rich sound. The other patients in the control group, underwent a relaxation programme instead of music therapy.

Participants were asked about their levels of relaxation and their wellbeing before and after their sessions. These values improved more in patients who underwent music therapy than in the control group. As the authors highlight, this trial is therefore the first to provide evidence of the efficacy of receptive music therapy. The authors suggest that the relaxation exercises used in the trial can be used by music therapists to treat palliative care patients.

Reproduced from Embody, Spring 2016 p14



## Carers' Week 2016

It was "Carers' Week" 6th – 12th June this year. So on the 9th June the "Carers Wellbeing Initiative" (CWI) in collaboration with "Friends thru Cancer", a charity based in Hastings and St Leonards, organised a joint venture - "Wellbeing and Pamper Day for Carers" for a day of relaxation, wellbeing and social contact at the Pinehurst Holistic Health Centre in St Leonards. Throughout the day therapists from "Friends thru Cancer" including Manami, Julie, Valerie together with therapists from CWI Sarah and myself offered a variety of taster sessions in a wide range of complementary therapies including massage with essential oils, shiatsu, hand and foot massages, healing, reflexology, on site massage and more.

As usual, Susie Lyle who runs the Pinehurst Holistic Health Centre and our hostess for the day provided food and tea and coffee. We were blessed with great weather, sunny but not too hot, so spent considerable time in her fabulous garden having lunch and giving treatments. A fun time was had by all. Once again a very big thank you to Susie and "Friends thru Cancer" for making this a special day. If you would like to know more about "Friends thru Cancer" you can contact Susie on 01424 423687 or alternatively email [friendsthucancer@sky.com](mailto:friendsthucancer@sky.com)



As Susie pointed out - "Thanks for a successful day. Statistics show that 4 ½ therapists gave 36 sessions today, plus heaps of advice for a variety of problems. Well done – it has to make a difference to people's lives."

### Everyday mindfulness linked to healthy glucose levels

Everyday mindfulness is the inherent quality of being aware of one's present thoughts and feelings. Here at CWI we are really fond of mindfulness techniques - from qi gong and tai chi to meditation and yoga.

In a new study of 399 people published in the *American Journal of Health Behaviour* that measured health indicators including mindfulness and blood glucose, researchers found that those with higher scores for mindfulness were significantly more likely than people with low scores to have healthy glucose levels.

The results show an association and do not prove a cause, but they are part of a programme led by Brown University in which researchers are studying whether interventions that increase mindfulness can improve cardiovascular health. The hypothesis is that people practicing higher degrees of mindfulness may be better able to motivate themselves to exercise, to resist cravings for high-fat, high-sugar treats, and to stick with a recommended diet and exercise regime.

The researchers analysis showed that obesity risk (mindful people are less likely to be obese) and sense of control (mindful people are more likely to believe they can change many of the important things in their life) both contribute to the link.

At our "Carers Wellbeing Day" we normally also try to provide a healthy lunch for our participants but quite often it is followed by yummy desert! See photo above! Perhaps CWI ought to be more mindful of its culinary choices in future!

CAM-mag, p41 April 2016

### Some of the therapies we use – massage

Massage is one of the oldest, simplest and most natural of all remedial and medical treatments. It is a systematic manipulation of soft body and connective tissue which is usually performed with the hands for therapeutic effect. Massage involves pressing, kneading and manipulating the body's soft tissue for therapeutic purposes to aid relaxation or alternatively to treat problem areas.

The benefits of massage include;

**The muscles** - the most obvious part of the body to benefit from massage. Through overuse and stress muscles can stay in a contracted state. Tight muscles can pull posture out of alignment and can constrict blood flow.

**Pain control** - we have different nerve receptors to take different messages back to the brain. Some of these messages travel quicker than painful ones. We can therefore mask pain by giving a pleasurable massage. If people are in pain they may not sleep well. By reducing their pain for a while, massage may improve the quality of sleep and have a positive effect on their health.

**Psychologically** - massage gives us a feeling of wellbeing. It allows us to switch off, unwind and be at peace for a while.

