

Negative attitudes to ageing effect both physical and cognitive health in later years

... new research reveals (Personality and Individual Differences 2015).

"Studies have shown that confronting an older person with negative stereotypes about ageing can reduce their physical ability, alter heart activity, reduce memory performance, and even diminish will to live during the course of an experiment", says Trinity College researcher Dr Deidre Robertson. "These effects are only present for a short time during the experiment and then disappear afterwards. With the omnipresence of ageism in society however, older adults are constantly faced with negative attitudes towards ageing."

"He told me I was too old for that", "She assumed I couldn't understand because of my age" are just some of the examples of everyday ageism that 77% of older adults surveyed by the Ageism Survey in the UK experienced, added Dr Robertson.

But the really worrying thing is that negative attitudes towards ageing affect not only how older adults are perceived but also how they function. In other words if you think



you are going to fall prey to "diseases of ageing", lose your eyesight, your hearing, need help to get out of a chair, walk with a Zimmer frame and all those other horrors all supposedly inevitable – then that's just what you'll get.

Given that according to WHO data (World Health Organisation) the UK does not do well when it comes to league tables showing life expectancy in our seniors, it may be time for us all to realise, that (strange as it may seem) the vast majority of older adults are NOT physically, cognitively or mentally impaired.

Martin S, in CAM March 2016, p3.

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Tai Chi and Qi Gong

Sleep disorders are one of the most common difficulties facing older people. Meditative movement interventions (MMIs), exercise integrating physical activity and meditation (e.g., tai chi, yoga, and qigong), may benefit older people with sleep problems, say the authors of this systematic review who synthesized the evidence on the effect of MMIs on older people's quality of sleep.

Chinese researchers reviewed 14 randomised controlled trials covering 1,225 people and found the exercises had a moderate effect on improving sleep especially if carried out more than three times a week.

Although the current review demonstrates that MMI have a moderate effect on improving the quality of sleep for older people with sleep complaints, because of the varying study quality and different MMI modalities, the evidence is inconclusive say the authors.

The study also highlights the need for higher quality research and the need for comparing the effectiveness of MMI to different subgroups of the elderly population.

Wu W et al, *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* 2015 / *Frontline* 13th April 2016, Vol 22, Issue 7

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An interesting article reproduced from the Sun newspaper!

Mind bending - Yoga slashes risk of Alzheimer's in later life

Doing regular Yoga could slash the risk of Alzheimer's disease, a study claims. Experts found a three month course of Yoga and meditation was better than doing puzzles at preserving brain function. They studied 25 over 55s who had trouble remembering names or appointments. Some spent 20 minutes a day doing memory exercises while the rest did a weekly Yoga class and practised every day.

After 3 months both groups saw similar memory improvements but the Yoga group were better at recalling locations and navigating while walking or driving. Researchers at the University of California Los Angeles said the results show the ancient physical discipline could be a cheap way to cut the risk of dementia in later life. Dr Laura Phipps, From Alzheimer's Research UK, welcomed the results but said it was a small study and would need following up in a larger group over a longer period of time.

She added; "While there is growing evidence to suggest physical activity is beneficial for cognition, it's still unclear what type and intensity of activity could be most important."

Around 850,000 Brits have some form of dementia such as Alzheimer's.

The Sun, Wed, May 11th 2015 p12

CWI attends "Camexpo 2016"

Taking place annually at Olympia, "Camexpo" is the UK's most dedicated event for natural and integrative healthcare professionals. Running for 14 years it has played a key role at the heart of the CAM community which has helped to change the lives of millions of people. Therapists or healthcare professionals can attend hands-on workshops and seminars and hear from top experts in the field...education and innovation.

Regrettably we have been informed that this annual event is to discontinue.

So it was especially important to catch up with friends and former work colleagues at this year's event, including (L to R) ; (i) Dr Brian Isbell PhD; former Head of Department of Chinese Medicine and Complementary Therapies at the University of Westminster (UoW), (ii) Andy Jancewicz; Lead Therapist of CWI and former Senior Lecturer and Clinic Tutor in Complementary Therapies (UoW), (iii) Jill Rowley; former Course Leader and Clinic Tutor in Naturopathy (UoW), former Health Science Tutor: Access To Nursing Morley College, former Chronic Pain Support Group Researcher Kent Community NHS and (iv) Simon Martin; editor and journalist who has been writing and researching alternative medicine and natural health for more than 30 years. He is a former editor of "Here's Health" and the "Journal of Alternative Medicine". He is also an elite masters athlete and won the world masters cross-country championship in Canada in 2010 (the Silver Fox category I believe!) All in all, quite a line up.



Low vitamin D predicts aggressive prostate cancer

A new study provides a major link between low levels of vitamin D and aggressive prostate cancer. Northwestern Medicine research showed deficient vitamin D blood levels in men can predict aggressive prostate cancer identified at the time of surgery.

The finding is important because it can offer guidance to men and their doctors who may be considering active surveillance, in which they monitor the cancer rather than remove the prostate.

"Men with dark skin, low vitamin D intake or low sun exposure should be tested for vitamin D deficiency when they are diagnosed with an elevated PSA or prostate cancer. Then a deficiency should be corrected with supplements", said lead investigator Dr Adam Murphy.

Previous studies showing an association with vitamin D levels and aggressive prostate cancer were based on blood drawn well before treatment. The new Northwestern study provides a more direct correlation because it measured D levels within a couple of months before the tumour was visually identified as aggressive during surgery to remove the prostate (radical prostatectomy).

As vitamin D is a biomarker for bone health and aggressiveness of other diseases, all men should check their levels. Murphy said, "All men should be replenishing their vitamin D to normal levels," Murphy said. "It's smart preventative healthcare."

The study was published in the Journal of Clinical Oncology and was part of a larger ongoing study of 1,760 men in the Chicago area examining vitamin D and prostate cancer.

CAM April 2016 p42

Effect of Tai Chi on four chronic conditions

Tai Chi can help people gain fitness even if they have chronic health conditions, say researchers who reviewed 33 studies that met an inclusion criteria that included full text reviews, quality assessment and data abstraction - of patients with cancer, osteoarthritis, heart failure or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Meta analyses were performed on diseases specific symptoms, physiological outcomes and physical performance of each chronic condition.

Many middle aged and older persons have more than one chronic condition. Thus it is important to synthesise the effectiveness of interventions across several comorbidities. The aim of this systematic review was to summarise current evidence regarding the effectiveness of Tai Chi in individuals with four common chronic conditions - cancer, osteoarthritis (OA), heart failure (HF) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD).



Results showed that Tai Chi improved or showed a tendency to improve physical performance outcomes, including 6 min walking distance, and knee extensor strength, in most or all four chronic conditions. The meditative exercise also showed to improve disease specific symptoms of pain and stiffness in osteoarthritis.

Chen YW et al, Br J Sports Med 2016 Apr; 50(7): 397-407