

Treating travel related phobias with hypnotherapy

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Hypnotic procedures have a long history. Induction techniques were used in treatment by the ancient Greeks. In modern medicine the ethical use of hypnotherapy was accepted by the BMA in 1954. The use of hypnosis to treat, facilitate treatment or as an adjunct to therapy is now firmly established and utilised by psychologists, GPs, and some nurses.

It is used in pain and stress reduction, anxiety and phobic states, and for deconditioning of unwanted habits and addictions. Post graduate medical education courses on hypnotic induction and therapy are popular and several universities have a curriculum leading to the award of a degree in the subject.

What is Hypnosis?

There is general agreement that hypnosis is an altered conscious state involving mechanisms of attention and habituation of whatever duration. The involvement of attention is the sine qua non of hypnosis differentiating it from other altered conscious states. A behavioural phenomenon, the state facilitates rapid learning, enhances memory and helps the mechanism of conditioning to be established more quickly than if the patient is not hypnotised¹. The importance of hypnosis in treatment lies in its ability to bypass critical faculties of the conscious mind.