

# Hypnotherapy for people living with irritable bowel syndrome (IBS); what influences perceptions and effectiveness

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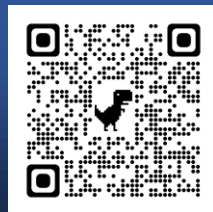
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## Key Findings

1. People with IBS are open to hypnotherapy.
2. Hypnotherapy for IBS appears to be most effective when delivered weekly to small groups over 7+ sessions.

### Full Details



### Next Steps

A feasibility trial of recorded hypnotherapy for IBS developed from these findings is planned but the perspective of **general practitioners** on hypnotherapy is poorly understood. As they have a major role in advising patients about IBS management more research into this is needed.

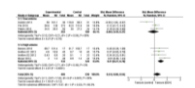
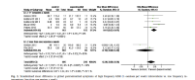
#### References

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**Results (continued)** -...positive towards hypnotherapy, and believed it was likely to be beneficial for psychological issues and effective at supporting the treatment of physical issues. This was however conditional upon associations with conventional medicine or psychology.

The qualitative study recruited 17 participants (15 female, 2 male). The analysis of those interviews identified that participants were unaware that hypnotherapy could be used as an intervention for IBS but were open to it once the idea was introduced. Acceptability was conditional upon cost and the presence of definable markers of therapist validity such as experience, qualifications, and professional memberships.

The systematic review identified twelve trials of which seven fulfilled the requirements for the meta-analysis and subgroup analysis. subgroup analysis of trials of hypnotherapy for IBS identified three delivery characteristics of a hypnotherapy for IBS intervention which were associated with effective delivery 1) delivery to groups of 4-8 participants, 2) weekly sessions and 3) high-volume delivery (7+ sessions) ( see figure 3-5 below).



The survey was conducted by 109 people with IBS. Of these 55% had never heard of hypnotherapy, but 73.4% said they would use it if cost and time were not issues, this confirmed a trend identified in the qualitative study. Both cost and time were identified as substantial barriers to engagement with hypnotherapy for IBS.

**Conclusion** - The findings show poor awareness of hypnotherapy for IBS, but a broad openness to it and provide guidance for intervention delivery.

**Background** - Hypnotherapy is demonstrably effective in treating irritable bowel syndrome (IBS),(1, 2) a chronic functional condition, characterized by gastric pain.(3) However, hypnotherapy for IBS appears to be relatively little used by people living with the condition. Further, it is not known what combination of delivery factors best contribute to effectiveness.

**Aims** - To identify the perceptions of people with IBS regarding hypnotherapy for their condition and to understand what factors in the delivery of hypnotherapy for IBS affect outcomes.

**Methods/approach** - A mixed methods investigation was undertaken, consisting of four parts.

A narrative review of 20 years of English language journal articles covering members of the public's opinions of hypnosis and hypnotherapy.

A qualitative research study consisting of an inductive thematic analysis of semi-structured interviews of a convenience sample of people with IBS examining their opinions of hypnotherapy as a possible intervention was conducted. Recruitment was via poster advertisement from campuses of various West Midlands (UK) universities and through online IBS support groups.

A systematic review of nine databases for trials of hypnotherapy for IBS in adults with a concurrent comparator and that used Manning or ROME diagnostic criteria. A random effects meta-analysis and subgroup analysis of these was undertaken to explore previously defined potential factors that might determine hypnotherapy's effectiveness for IBS.

An internet survey of adults with IBS, based on the findings of the thematic analysis and the systematic review, was conducted to identify their level of knowledge about and acceptability of hypnotherapy for IBS. Recruitment was through online IBS support groups.

**Results** - The narrative review identified 31 articles covering a diverse population which found that the public were broadly...

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