



*What Therapists can Learn
from Ancient and Alternative
Healing Traditions*

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Improving Therapist Effectiveness: What Works and does not Work?

OCTOBER 13, 2016 BY SCOTTDM - 5 COMMENTS

One year ago, colleagues and I released the largest, longitudinal study of therapist effectiveness ever published. The study examined outcomes of 6500 clients treated by 170 practitioners whose results had been tracked an average of 5 years—some as long as 17 years!

The result? Clinician outcomes, on average, not only did *not* improve, but actually slowly and inexorably worsened with time and experience—and this, despite the fact that

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How Psychotherapy Lost Its Magick

The Art of Healing in an Age of Science

By **Scott Miller, Mark Hubble**

March/April 2017

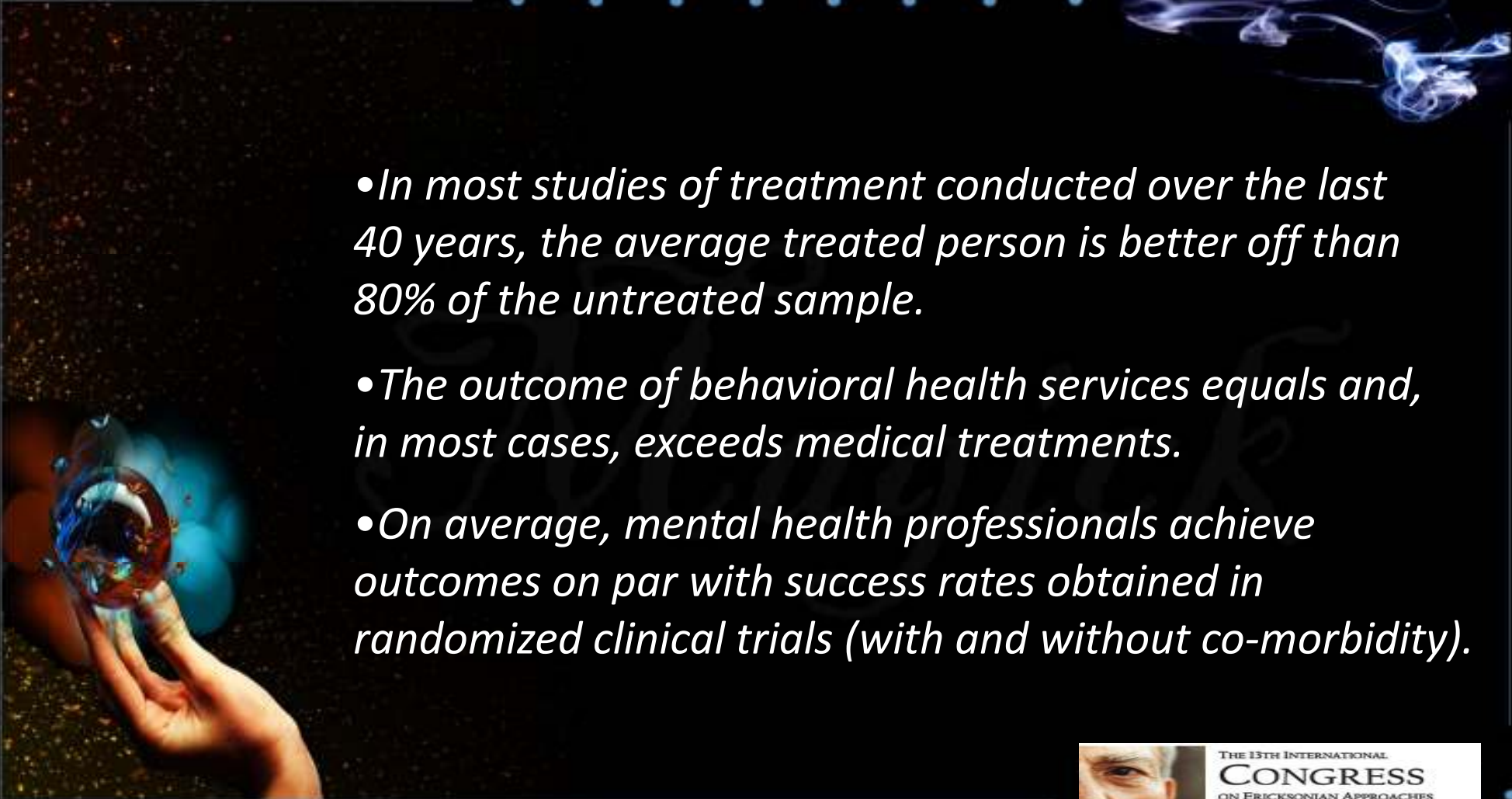
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Children are supposed to outlive their parents. No one says as much until the unspeakable happens—then everyone says it. At least that’s what Abigail found as people shuffled past the light blue, steel casket containing the body of her daughter, Lizzy. For 18 years, Abigail had devoted herself to not just taking care of Lizzy, but giving her a life. Her loss was devastating.

Shortly after her birth, it was clear something was wrong. Lizzy’s body would alternately stiffen, jerk, and go floppy. She didn’t eat right and was often impossible to soothe. As


the months passed, she missed key developmental milestones. She couldn’t lift her head or roll over on her own. Seizures began, and eventually a grim diagnosis was made: severe cerebral palsy.

Lizzy would never speak, walk, feed herself, or control basic bodily functions, and doctors questioned how much she understood of what was said. But despite these realities, in many respects, her life was like that of any other American kid. Abigail saw to that. She insisted that Lizzy attend classes with children her own age, and Lizzy’s teachers and classmates made sure she wasn’t excluded from any activity. “No grass grew under her feet,” Abigail recalled with a laugh when we spoke with her. “We went everywhere with her chair and the van. At my parents’ summer home, she loved to be out in the sun and ride in the boat.”

- 
- *In most studies of treatment conducted over the last 40 years, the average treated person is better off than 80% of the untreated sample.*
 - *The outcome of behavioral health services equals and, in most cases, exceeds medical treatments.*
 - *On average, mental health professionals achieve outcomes on par with success rates obtained in randomized clinical trials (with and without co-morbidity).*

Duncan, B., Miller, S., Wampold, B., & Hubble, M. (eds.) (2009). *The Heart and Soul of Change: Delivering What Works*. Washington, D.C.: APA Press.






Despite being on the scene for close to 150 years, the field does not, and never has had mass appeal:

- *The majority of people who could benefit (~25%) never seek help (~66%);*
- *Fewer are turning to psychotherapy—33% less than did 20 years ago;*
- *Most never return after the first appointment (~57%);*

Swift, J. & Greenberg, R. (2015). *Premature termination in psychotherapy*. Washington, D.C.: APA Press.
Guadiano, B., Miller, I. (2013). The evidence-based practice of psychotherapy. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 33, 813-824.

World Health Organization *(2001). Mental disorders affect 1 in 4 people.
http://www.who.int/whr/2001/media_centre/press_release/en/ Retrieved October 29, 2015.



In addition to struggling to attract and keep people in psychotherapy:

- *1 in 4 people who do attend, drop out before achieving a measurable improvement;*
- *Half (40-60%) of those who stay experience no benefit whatsoever;*
- *The overall outcome of psychotherapy has not improved in 40 years.*

Swift, J. & Greenberg, R. (2015). *Premature termination in psychotherapy*. Washington, D.C.: APA Press..

Miller, S., Hubble, M., Chow, D., & Seidel, J. (2013). The outcome of psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy*, 50, 88-97.



- *Annually, more people attend and pay out of pocket to work with a reader, medium, or clairvoyant than see mental health practitioners!*
- *According to a recent, independent analysis, the psychic services industry is growing annually by 2%.*
 - *Between 2007 and 2012, practitioners of the mystic arts raked in a staggering 2.1 billion dollars.*





“Our ground breaking survey shows that psychotherapy usually works...”

Consumer Reports (November, 1995). Mental health: Does Therapy Help? 734-739.

Seligman, M. (1995). The effectiveness of psychotherapy: The Consumer Reports study. *American Psychologist*, 50, 12, 965-974.


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- *Helpfulness of professional mental health providers, physicians, friends, and psychics.*



Farhall, J., Pepping, C., Miller, S.D., and Johnson, L.D. (in preparation). Psychics, doctors, psychologists and friends: consumer rated effectiveness of consultations for stress and emotional problems.



“The powerful sense that there are patterns, forces, energies, and entities operating in the world that...go beyond the boundaries of natural phenomena...”



Hood, B. (2008). *SuperSense*. New York: Harper Collins, p. 8.

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*"There are more things in heaven
and earth, . . . than are dreamt of in
your philosophy."*

Hamlet