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Research Confirms the Bowen Technique's Effectiveness on Parkinson's Disease

You probably have all seen someone with the tell-tale signs of Parkinson's disease. Perhaps a beloved family member, someone you've seen at the shops, or a client in your clinic. For the last five years I have been in close contact with a family friend with Parkinson's and have witnessed first hand the restriction and frustrating immobility that people with this disease live with on a daily basis: the frozen, impassive face which is unable to respond spontaneously in ordinary conversation; the shaking of the limbs that at times do not allow a pen to be held or a hot drink to be enjoyed. Then there is the rigidity and slow movements that lead to a bent-over posture and shuffling gait. Obviously these symptoms impact tremendously on quality of life – but it doesn't end there. There is also the nausea, vomiting, hallucinations, involuntary movements and depression caused by Parkinson's medication.

Being witness to these conditions motivated me to conduct research into the disease; to see how, as a Bowen Technique practitioner, I could improve motor function and quality of life for my friend and others with Parkinson's.

I recruited five participants from three Parkinson's support groups on Sydney's North Shore. Each participant received five treatments over a six week period. All participants gave informed consent and agreed to receive no other therapies, start any new supplements or begin any new activity which might skew the results of the study.

I used two standardised, widely used, objective scales, specific for Parkinson's disease, to measure the results of the treatments. They were completed before treatment started and then again one week after the last treatment. The first was a quality of life (QoL) questionnaire and the second a motor function assessment.

My intent was to not just treat the symptoms of PD but to address the cause – neurological dysfunction. It became evident however, that not all participants were responding to strong CNS-influencing procedures such as TMJ, so a more gradual treatment approach was adopted to address the most immediate symptoms at hand, such as hand tremor, gait and back stiffness.

BOWTECH Procedures Used

Procedure	No. of participants receiving it	Reason for use
3 Basic Relaxation Procedures	5	Prerequisite/Balancing
Upper Respiratory/TMJ	4	Strong influence on CNS
Kidney	4	Effect water redistribution/balance adrenals
Rhomboid	3	Improve posture/kyphosis
Sternal	3	Strong influence on CNS
Ankle	3	Improve gait/reduce tremor

Hamstring	2	Reduce tension
Respiratory	2	Beneficial for participant
Coccyx	2	Strong influence on CNS
Additional TMJ	1	Strong influence on CNS
Knee Reflex	1	Improve gait/influence on CNS
Shoulder	1	Reduce tremor/influence on CNS
Elbow/Wrist	1	Reduce tremor
Pelvic	1	Improve gait

The results of the study showed, on a very small scale, that Bowen can improve motor function and/or quality of life. Below is a summary:

Motor Function: - Average decrease in symptoms: 40%

- 3 of 4 participants experienced reduced *tremor*
- 3 of 3 participants experienced reduced *rigidity*
- 3 of 3 participants experienced improved *leg agility*
- 2 of 2 participants experienced improved *posture*

Note: Participants did not present with all symptoms

Quality of Life: - Average improvement in QoL: 12.5%

- *Mobility* improved 37%
- Notable improvements in *Activities of Daily Living, Well Being, Bodily Discomfort* and *Mobility* – aspects of QoL

The Bowen Technique appears to be beneficial for those with Parkinson's. This became evident long before the positive results above were available. The participant's smiling faces, sparkling eyes and wonderful comments throughout the treatment period said it all.

I trust this study will pave the way to larger studies that are increasingly statistically significant, so that the benefits of Bowen (improved quality of life, reduced symptoms and greater wellbeing) make their way into mainstream Parkinson's literature for all of those with this disease and those treating it.

For those interested in downloading the full study: [Effectiveness of the Bowen Technique as a Parkinson's Disease Treatment](#), please visit my website. The study gives additional important information on a Parkinson's specific research method for those wishing to conduct research into this disease in the future.

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