

# CoBaIT Study Update

# CoBaIT

SPRING 2009

## *Welcome to the first CoBaIT patient newsletter*

We would like to thank **YOU** for giving up your time to help the **CoBaIT** study. The purpose of this newsletter is to keep you updated with the progress of the study and pass on snippets of information about depression and its treatment generally.

### **WHAT is the CoBaIT study about?**

We want to find out more about what may be the best treatment for people whose symptoms of depression don't go away with the use of an antidepressant. This is often called Treatment Resistant Depression or TRD for short.

### **WHY it's important to do this study now.**

In December 2004, NICE [National Institute for Clinical Excellence] published guidelines for doctors about how to treat people who have depression. The guidelines suggested that "the combination of antidepressant medication with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy [CBT] should be considered" for patients with TRD. However, this report also said that further research was

needed because we don't know enough about TRD yet to say that CBT is definitely the best treatment. **CoBaIT** is a step towards improving treatment of TRD in the future.

### **WHAT progress?**

GP's in Bristol, Glasgow and Devon are helping with the study. Fifty-two people have now been entered into the main part of the study and more than 500 questionnaires have been returned to us which are all adding to our knowledge of depression, in particular TRD. The researchers have started collecting information about how the people taking part are feeling and the treatments they have received, three months after starting with the study.

## *What is NICE?*

*Mmmm....NICE*



### **The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)**

is the independent organisation responsible for providing national guidance on promoting good health and preventing and treating ill health in England & Wales.

Its guidance is for healthcare professionals and patients and their carers to help them make decisions about treatment and healthcare.

One of the responsibilities of NICE is technology appraisals - which look at the use of new and existing medicines and treatments within the NHS in England and Wales

The guidelines produced by NICE are put together by working groups, made up of health care professionals, patients, carers and their representatives, and scientists. The groups look at what evidence is available on the best ways to treat a condition, and make recommendations based on this. The quality of research evidence is assessed using strict guidelines as NICE aims to produce guidelines based on the best evidence available. This is why the NICE guidelines for depression published in 2004 were able to say the current evidence suggested that a combination of CBT and medication **"should be considered"** for TRD, **"but more research was needed"** to determine the benefits of its use.

[www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

On this page of the newsletter we aim to bring you snippets of information about depression and its treatment, which we hope you'll find useful. We start with some personal thoughts from Paul Lanham who has himself had depression

### "KNOWLEDGE IS POWER"

Written by Paul Lanham -  
Vice Chairman of Depression  
Alliance

There are few things more distressing than realising you are thinking irrationally but feeling unable to do anything about it. We take our mental faculties so much for granted that it can be very frightening when

they are threatened.

### What can be done?

We need to understand what is going on in our minds, and what sources of help are available. There is no swift solution to depression, but being better informed about its causes and treatments can help. This can reassure you that feelings of depression can be overcome and that it is not nearly as terrifying as it sometimes appears to be.

Make your GP the first port of call on your road to recovery. Talk to him or her about how you are feeling and about available treatments that might be best for you.

All of the following may be helpful to you:

- ◇ Eat wisely
- ◇ take adequate amounts of sleep and exercise
- ◇ practise relaxation
- ◇ join a self help group in your area.

Above all, *learn to love yourself*; do not belittle yourself for having depression and reward yourself for taking steps forward.

Tips on how to work in partnership with your doctor can be found at:

Depression Alliance—0845 123 23 20

[www.depressionalliance.org](http://www.depressionalliance.org)

### "Infilling moments"



Start bringing relaxation into your life by having brief pauses during the day. E.g. while waiting for the kettle to boil, standing at the photocopier or in a supermarket queue.

Just stop, let your shoulders drop, gently sigh your breath out through your mouth & pause for a moment. Drop your hands by your side & stretch your fingers and thumbs out and give your body a gentle shake.

These 'infilling moments' are opportunities to take your foot off the accelerator and put your mind into neutral.

#### Also

- ◇ Allow yourself moments of distraction; gaze out of the window & enjoy the view.
- ◇ Notice pleasurable things around you, however small.
- ◇ Smiling & laughing produce endorphins that can help you feel more relaxed.

Taken from [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Mind info Line—0845 766 01639am to 5pm. Mon to Fri

### TRY ONE OF THESE RELAXATION POSITIONS



Ensure table is close and arms are not stretched out



Support right up to behind knees  
Knees high enough to reduce tension in tummy  
Good for relieving lower backache

### The CoBaT study

<http://www.thecobaltstudy.ac.uk/>

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