

What's the Evidence?

Scotson Technique

Key findings

- Scotson therapy involves parents learning to apply light pressure on the muscles that are involved in breathing and posture. The techniques are applied in the belief that this will stimulate breathing, posture and function.
- There is no research evidence that Scotson therapy is effective in improving children's breathing, posture, functioning or health.

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What were we asked?

A parent asked if there was any evidence that the Scotson technique is effective. The Scotson technique is a kind of touch therapy available from the Advance Centre.

What did we do?

In 2011 we searched the Cochrane Library, TRIP database, PubMed, NHS Evidence and guidance issued by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). This search was updated in April 2013.

We contacted the Advance Centre which provides Scotson therapy; we spoke with Linda Scotson directly. We were referred to a study conducted by the University of Bradford that was sponsored by Advance; the report of that study is available online.¹

What did we find?

Scotson believes in a link between breathing and posture that adversely affects

children's postural and functional development.

The theory by which the Scotson technique might work has not been established. The

Bradford study considered ways in which the theory behind the Scotson treatment might be related to established physiological principles, but many of the assumptions remain to be substantiated. The Bradford study followed a large number of children who were receiving Scotson therapy. Changes in body size measurements seen in these children are unlikely to reflect any functional importance, nor be attributed to development and maturation, and only 3 of the 18 changes in body measurement were reported to be statistically significant

What do we think?

There is no scientific evidence that Scotson therapy is effective in improving children's breathing, posture, functioning or health. We are highly sceptical about Scotson therapy and the theory behind how it is supposed to work. We have major concerns with the claim that improvements can be achieved with 'all' children, even though they may have quite different conditions and diagnoses.

Signposts to other information

We would like to hear your feedback on this summary – please email us at pen cru@exeter.ac.uk

We have provided a link to this organisation for reference only; as can be seen from our comments, in no way do we endorse the products offered by this organisation.

www.scotsontechnique.com

References

1. Rachael Sharples (2005) The Scotson technique. An exploratory study to establish a theoretical base for the technique and investigate any potential effects. University of Bradford. Available from http://www.scotsontechnique.com/scientific_principles.php

Note: This information is produced by PenCRU researchers and reviewed by external experts. The views expressed are those of PenCRU at the University of Exeter Medical School and do not represent the views of the Cerebra charity, or any other parties mentioned. We strongly recommend seeking medical advice before undertaking any treatments/therapies.