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## Cerebral Palsy Study

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**The following article is a reprint from the Bowen News, Autumn 2013, Issue 66, and later issues.**

**The comments in here reflect the thoughts of the author only and are not those of Bowtech Training or the Bowen Association UK.**

Over the next few editions we're going to follow the progress of a study that Camelia Pop has set up to look at the efficacy of Bowen on Cerebral Palsy. In this edition, Camelia provides some background to the study and her initial results.



*Camelia Pop, Manchester*

This spring I found out about a 5-year-old boy from my area whose family was raising money for expensive surgery in the USA to help him stand up. I suddenly wanted to try helping him more than with a few pounds.

At that time I didn't know what *conditions or symptoms* cerebral palsy causes in a child. I didn't know about the seizures, or the Botox they have periodically in their ankles for instance. Before contacting the mother, I looked on UK websites for information about CP and Bowen in order to send to the mum. I found a few very good cases:

- <http://www.bowen-therapy.co/Bowen/kidsclinic/testimonial2.html>
- <http://www.thebowentechnique.com/case-histories.html#9>

And I found out more myself about how other children improved their quality of life.

The child came for his first session and a few days later he was able to cross his legs for the first time in his life and was more active and brighter at school, which was a surprise for both me and his mother!

He came for another session and then went on holiday. After that they were very busy fund raising (they need about £50,000) and didn't continue with Bowen. I see now pictures of the boy and he is very happy and active, no matter the hour of the day, just like a normal child.

But this case, even though they stopped the sessions, gave me confidence that I could really help those families to have a better lift. So I decided to run a project to look at how the Bowen Technique might help their mobility and quality of life.

### Publicity

The hard part was to publicise this project as newspapers and other societies wouldn't. I decided to work with 10-12 children aged between 0-14 years and offer them up to 10 sessions. All sessions are free of charge.

**If any of our members know someone who could guarantee that my press release gets printed in the Manchester area it would be very helpful.**

### My Group

I have 5 children so far, whose mothers found me on Netmums and Facebook. My group has quite a diverse set of conditions which include:

- A mild or severe version
- seizures or not
- be quadriplegic, hemiplegic
- good, poor or very poor eyesight, etc.

### Measurements

I will look at their:

- ability to walk and sit
- general coordination
- behavior
- ability to perform everyday activities
- muscle tension and muscular cramps
- tiredness
- speech

These metrics are not relevant for every child because they are very different, but at the end we'll look at how much they have improved in the relevant one. One child might still not walk but has started to play, smiles more often, be more interested in things, or have reduced seizures. It will still mean that Bowen has helped then ☺

### Introducing the Children

**Child #1** – Boy, 6 years old, can't sit, can't walk, but can speak and he is a happy and clever boy. This is a boy who said to his

mum: "Mum I wish I could run one day like other children".

After 2 sessions – no change in his physical condition but is very happy and speaks all day long without breaks. He is full of energy and blows his whistle a lot! I think he speaks more clearly now.

His mum was a little bit disappointed that she didn't see a change in his arms or legs but I told her to be patient. I pointed out the improvement in his emotional side, which is important and the fact that now he speaks happily all day long. That meant his brain responded to Bowen and is a good thing. He has had his 3rd session and I'll report on that in the next edition.

**Child #2** – Girl, 9 years old, mild cerebral palsy, can walk, hemiplegia, left arm and leg affected, pains in the right leg when she walks more than 500m, seizures. Never sleeps during the daytime.

After the first session she fell asleep in the car on their way home! After 2 sessions there is no change in her limbs. She had just 1 seizure in the week following the second session, but her father can't link this to Bowen because she's had periods before without seizures.

I asked about her emotional level and behaviour and the response was that yes, she had a good week, happy and well behaved but maybe it's just because of school holiday. So we have to wait more until we see something happening.

She has had her 3rd session.

**Child #3** – Baby Boy, 14 months old, a twin, total body involvement, can't sit on his own, happy, responsive. Left side more affected.

After the 1st session: his left hip badly rotated inwards, left leg very stiff. However he seems to be using his left hand more with his fingers moving individually and open! She thinks that's because she stopped the hips stretching\*. Personally I believe that's a response, see Bowen Hands March 2012, page 18, Andra with brachial plexus palsy. I sent to mum this article.

**\*Note:** Some children with CP are advised to do not just exercises (physiotherapy) but also strong stretching of the hips for

instance that I believe can annihilate the Bowen moves.

2nd session: the baby was very happy to see me, that's good, babies feel instinctively if you help them or if you harm them. Left leg wasn't very stiff, left hip still rotated but maybe not so badly. He fell asleep during the session. I told the mum to do the stretching if she really wants to do it, but that it will affect the Bowen outcome. I gave her the Bowen booklet by John Wilks to understand more about Bowen and build her confidence in Bowen.

3rd session:

- the hip is not inverted anymore, and mum doesn't do any stretches!
- Legs seems to be more flexible and now he uses his left arm and hand very often.
- Fingers moving individually and he grabs toys with this hand which he didn't do before Bowen!

**Child #4** - Girl, 14 years old, severe cerebral palsy, can't sit, can't walk, can't talk, just vocalizes, very sleepy, poor eyesight, doesn't want to play, smiles occasionally, but she understands what people say to her, multiple infections.

After 1st session, she slept all day and night and woke up the next day at 3pm (~27 hours)! When she woke up started vocalising very loudly (this is nearly a miracle for the parents), smiling and very alert and taking interest in her toys and surroundings. She now stretches out her legs, arches her back and stretches out her arms when waking which the parents have not seen before. They are amazed.

After 2nd session, she wasn't as active as after her first, but still vocalised a lot. She has picked up an infection and is on antibiotics, so she will have to wait for her third session.

**Child #5** – Girl, 2.5 years, twin, hemiplegia left side, hydrocephalus, can't walk, can't stand, speech delayed, poor focus.

Whilst writing up her details, I found out that she is having strong manipulation every Friday for 6 Fridays, but she will finish this programme in September. We will start the study after that. In any case, I performed BRM 1m1-4 and BRM 2 m1-4 so that she

got a few days of benefit from the Bowen. On the second day the girl woke later than usual. Mum very happy!

### [To be continued...]

I'm excited to say that we have the next instalment of Camelia's study results below. I've kept the introduction to each child and included the progress report. *Ed.*

Camelia explains the protocol she follows:

On my Module 8, instructor Andrew Zoppos provided a protocol for strokes and immobilised persons. I thought that it would be useful for children with cerebral palsy. Then I found out that other colleagues used this protocol for children with cerebral palsy leaving breaks of 2 weeks.

- **Session 1:**
  - BRM1 moves 1-2
  - BRM 2 m1-4
  - Hit-the-Lat,
  - Head.
- **Session 2:**
  - BRM1 m1-2
  - BRM1 m1-4 (yes that's right)
  - BRM 2 m1-4
  - BRM 2 m9-16
  - Kidney.
- **Session 3:**
  - BRM1 complete
  - BRM 2 m1-4
  - BRM 2 m9-16
  - Kidney
  - Knee
- **Session 4:**
  - BRM1 m1-2
  - BRM1 m1-4
  - BRM 2 (minus 9-16)
  - Respiratory
  - Gall bladder
- **Session 5:**
  - BRM1 m1-2
  - BRM2 (minus 9-16)
  - Lower Respiratory
  - Gall Bladder
  - Arm+Elbow+Wrist (all the arm and forearm)

**Note 1:** On some children I left out the Head procedure because they became tired or I thought that a particular child had too severe a condition to cope with so many moves in the first session. This is the case

for Child #4 but who still had a major change in her condition after her first session.

**Note 2:** With Child #2 for session #4, I stayed more on the lower part of her body because she has pains when she walks. So I decided to do Hamstrings, Knees and maybe Ankle/toes if she could handle all these procedures in the session.

**Note 3:** I think that the Kidney procedure is essential for someone who doesn't move because an immobilized body is full of toxins and needs to eliminate them.

The Kidney also works the supra-renal glands and these glands are very important because they are chiefly responsible for the release of hormones in response to stress situations, resistance to infections, regulation of metabolism, etc. In Cerebral Palsy it is obvious that some or all of the above are out of balance.

**Note 4:** After the first BRM m1-2 I leave a 10-minute break.

*Camelia Pop, Manchester*

### The Children – cont.

**Child #1** – Boy, 6 years old, can't sit, can't walk, but can speak and he is a happy and clever boy. This is a boy who said to his mum: "Mum I wish I could run one day like other children".

Rather than blowing his whistle, he does actually whistle like an adult!

His parents report that after 4 sessions there is no main area showing anything different except he seems to be more active with his movements and he is a lot more talkative since beginning the programme.

He has wanted to stand more (with parents holding him) and his feet do seem slightly flatter rather than being on his toes so much. He also seemed to be a little bit steadier using his cutlery. These are small improvements but any change means a step towards a better life.

After 6 sessions: His aunty (who doesn't live with them and can observe changes easily) observed that he was putting his toys away into a box one after another without any

problems whereas before he would struggle and his hand and arm would dither with each movement.

After 7 sessions: He has been sitting more upright whilst kneeling up playing on the floor definitely using both hands more than just favouring one.

**Child #2** – Girl, 9 years old, mild cerebral palsy, can walk, hemiplegia, left arm and leg affected, pains in the right leg when she walks more than 500m, seizures. Never sleeps during the daytime.

After 3 sessions her parents can see small improvement in her balance, muscle tension, emotional state, behaviour, eating and speaking.

After 4 sessions she had a big break of 7 weeks due to her left arm having Botox injected into it after which she did not feel well and took some time to recover. Following this “surgery” she had more seizures than when I first met her.

After 5 sessions – seizures are less frequent and last week she had no seizure!

**Child #3** – Baby Boy, 14 months old, a twin, total body involvement, can't sit on his own, happy, responsive. Left side more affected.

After 5 sessions his physiotherapist could see a big improvement in his supported sitting and overall tone and strength

After 6 sessions – He reaches and explores with his left arm a lot more than before (before he used just right arm and hand) and even tried to pick up a jigsaw piece with his left hand which he has never done before. He can also put both hands together and has rolled over for the first time.

**Child #4** - Girl, 14 years old, severe cerebral palsy, can't sit, can't walk, can't talk, just vocalizes, very sleepy, poor eyesight, doesn't want to play, smiles occasionally, but she understands what people say to her, multiple infections.

After 3 sessions Susan pushes out and stretches her back to the point where she arches her back. She also seems much more settled and relaxed in between stretches.

After 4 sessions she defecated 3 times by herself in a week, which has never

happened in the last 5 years. Usually she requires medicines for constipation.

Before the Bowen treatments Susan needed Colomicyn Nebulizer twice daily. After a few sessions of Bowen Therapy Susan has not needed any of the Colomicyn for 5 weeks. Normally if parents stopped the Colomicyn she would turn blue as the Pseudomonas infection makes thick mucus which she cannot cough up and begins to choke.

Sometimes she has to defecate during the sessions, in the last 5 years she was always so constipated that she needed external help from her parents.

**Child #5** – Girl, 2.5 years, twin, hemiplegia left side, hydrocephalus, can't walk, can't stand, speech delayed, poor focus.

Sadly, did not return for her 2<sup>nd</sup> session.

**Child #6** – Boy, 15 months old, total body involvement, left side more affected, doesn't use his left hand, can't sit on his own, and can't focus on things.

After 2 sessions I had a big surprise: He smiles a lot, he focuses on things, and makes happy sounds.

His mother observed that he:

- Is more alert when you walk into a room.
- Responds to things around him e.g. toys, remote control.
- Focuses more when there is a person in a room.
- His stiff left hand is more relaxed and he plays with it more.
- Rolls a bit more on the floor
- Now talks more, makes more sounds.
- Happier and more alert.

After 4 sessions:

- He now concentrates when watching cartoons on TV
- His left hand is more relaxed and if you put toys in his left hand he can hold for short periods of time.
- He has improved in his rolling
- He sleeps longer during the day and all night.
- During the 2 last Bowen sessions he smiled and “spoke” all the time.

This baby is totally changed, I'm so impressed.

[To be continued...]

## The Children – cont.

**Child #1** – Boy, 6 years old, can't sit, can't walk, but can speak and he is a happy and clever boy. This is a boy who said to his mum: "Mum I wish I could run one day like other children".

After 10 sessions, we can see that his biggest improvements are in his:

- Balance
- Memory
- Focusing ability
- Interaction with other people
- Emotional State

He is more vocal with good speech.

His coordination is still not very good but after he plays he tidies up easily without dithering with each movement. His ability to perform every day activities has improved when we look at how he uses now his cutlery and how he tidies up the toys.

His mum said: "since starting Bowen he has become a lot more talkative and happier", "he is more focused and his memory skills are very good".

**Child #2** – Girl, 9 years old, mild cerebral palsy, can walk, hemiplegia, left arm and leg affected, pains in the right leg when she walks more than 500m, seizures. Never sleeps during the daytime.

Her treatment has been disrupted due to surgery. After 4 sessions she had a 7-week break, then another 3 sessions. After 7 sessions she had hip surgery and was too weak to come to the clinic.

Her family has noticed:

- Slight physical improvement in muscle tone and flexibility
- Significant development in emotional and social behavior

Since mid-October a change in medicine has coincided with being "seizure free". The drugs are working much more effectively. No seizures for the last month, a dramatic improvement from 6-10 seizures a day.

There are also improvements in her eating and trembling, and small improvements in her balance, ability to perform everyday

activities, muscle tension and muscular cramps, and tiredness.

**Child #3** – Baby Boy, 14 months old, a twin, total body involvement, can't sit on his own, happy, responsive. Left side more affected.

After 5 sessions his physiotherapist could see a big improvement in his supported sitting and overall tone and strength.

He had 8 sessions altogether. When having his 7th session his mum wrote this: "D brings his left arm forward much more. He is putting both hands together and exploring his left hand. He is reaching with his left arm a lot more and even tried to pick up a jigsaw piece with his left hand which he has never done before. D rolled over for the first time [at 16 months]."

His improvements were in his balance, coordination, muscle tension, tiredness, and starting to use his left hand.

**Child #4** - Girl, 14 years old, severe cerebral palsy, can't sit, can't walk, can't talk, just vocalizes, very sleepy, poor eyesight, doesn't want to play, smiles occasionally, but she understands what people say to her, multiple infections.

After 10 sessions, she has improvement in:

- Eyesight
- Muscle tension
- Trembling
- Emotional state (she is happier)
- Speech (vocalises more)
- Stretching and moving legs
- Constipation

Her mum wrote: "Before Bowen Therapy, Susan, an alias, has never been able to bear her weight. After 10 sessions she is able to weight bear on both legs for around 1 minute before leaning on her dad for support. Her legs would be a little bent at the knee. Hopefully with some more sessions she may be able to straighten both legs and the length of time standing will increase. Susan has never stood unaided in her life. It was unbelievable to witness her stand for the first time."

**Child #5** – Girl, 2.5 years, twin, hemiplegia left side, hydrocephalus, can't walk, can't stand, speech delayed, poor focus.

Sadly, did not return for her 2<sup>nd</sup> session.



**Child #6** – Boy, 15 months old, total body involvement, left side more affected, doesn't use his left hand, can't sit on his own, and can't focus on things.

After 9 sessions he has improvements in:

- Sitting
- Rolling
- Muscle tension
- Sleeping
- Focusing ability
- Ability to perform everyday activities
- Coordination.

In general, he is now very happy and talkative. His auntie saw a general huge improvement after not seeing him for 2 months. His consultant also is impressed by his evolution.

### **Project Extension**

The project went so well that the Remedy Lounge manager and I decided to continue the project and other children have recently joined the project. I advertised only on Netmums, as a post on noticeboard, and immediately I had enquiries from parents. I'll introduce the children and their evolution in the next issue.

### **[To be continued...]**

Camelia's excellent study continues with 7 new children added to her programme. However, we bring this newsletter series to a close with a conclusion on the first 6 children. Camelia will produce a report on her overall programme and hopes to publish that when she's finished. I'm sure you'll agree that this has been a most interesting study. *Ed.*

## **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to see whether Bowen would improve the symptoms endured by children with Cerebral Palsy, and if so measure the amount of improvement.

Many parents commented that they had always wanted to try a therapy but didn't know which ones are effective. There are so many on the market that they did not want to waste time and money with no results.

A study, such as this one with many children, might make them decide to try Bowen. So the other goal of this study is to publish the results on the internet and make them available to parents looking for some data and facts.

## **Overview**

Although Camelia started with 6 children, Child #5 did not return after the first session. In order to be part of the summary, each child had to attend 2 sessions and provide at least one assessment.

The assessment chart was marked by the parents using the following scale out of 10:

- 1-3: No problems or satisfactory
- 4-7: minor problems
- 8-10 Serious problems

At the start of the study and then again after approximately every 3 or 4 sessions, the parent would rate their child against the symptoms. The assessment specified 17 types of symptoms and sometimes the parent would add in extra ones.

Example symptoms include:

- Ability to walk
- Co-ordination
- Balance
- Urination control
- Perform everyday activities
- Eyesight
- Trembling
- Emotional State
- ...

The children received 8-10 sessions over the period of 6-10 months.

## **Summary and Conclusions**

Of the remaining 5 children, any child that received Bowen every 2 weeks, with occasional 4 week gaps, showed good improvement in one or more symptoms, where "good" means a drop of 2-3 points.

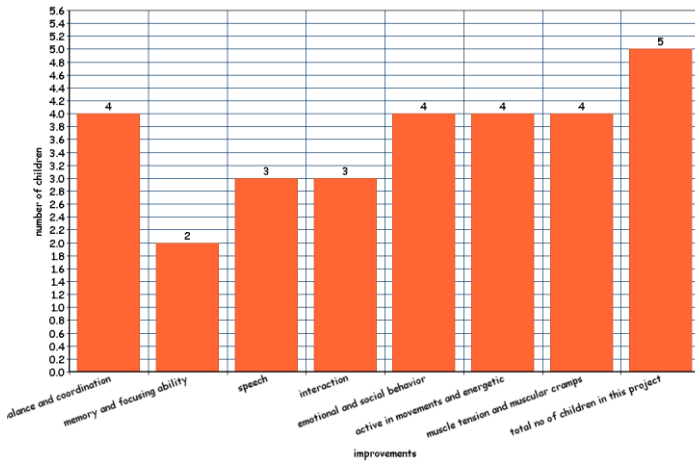
The child with the least improvement was Child #2. Although she had 9 sessions in 10 months, her treatment was disrupted for long periods due to surgery. After each surgery her symptoms were worse than before the treatment.

The following graph shows the number of children who had an improvement in a particular symptom.

The symptoms that had the most children (4) show improvements were:

- Balance and Co-ordination
- Emotional and Social Behaviour
- Active and Energetic Movements
- Muscle tension and Muscle Cramps

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The amount of improvement is not summarised because of its subjective nature. For instance, what Camelia thought was a good improvement was sometimes seen as a slight improvement by the parent and vice-versa. The assessment recorded the parent's view.

From this small study and lack of scientific rigour, it is not possible to prove anything of statistical significance. However, as you can see from this series, improvements were noted and recorded by the parents. And Camelia has received letters of thanks where the parents have attributed the change to her work.

Her study has now been extended and includes a further 7 children. I for one, look forward to her publishing her study on the internet and will use it as a reference for parents looking for respite for their children.

Well done Camelia! *Ed.*