

## **New research shows massage therapy improves alertness and accuracy in the workplace**

The Therapy Agency in collaboration with Cognitive Drug Research (CDR) has carried out pioneering research on the effects of onsite massage therapies. Results from the pilot study, involving staff at Directline Holidays, identified substantial improvements to alertness and calmness as well as more accurate response on tasks requiring sustained attention.

Data from the study was collected to monitor responses before and after staff received onsite treatment by a massage therapist provided by The Therapy Agency. Tests were carried out for statistical analysis. Significant changes in mood and alertness were identified. Results showed a large increase in calmness and heightened levels of alertness.

Choice reaction time tests were used to determine the effect of massage therapy on cognition, the mental processes used to acquire, store, retrieve and utilise information. There were significant indications of a rise in levels of accuracy. Improvement in performance reflected better ability to sustain attention, suggesting that this is a direct consequence of massage therapy. "It confirmed what we've known for a long time: that businesses have much to gain from onsite massage therapy" said Jason Parlour, managing director of The Therapy Agency.

The Therapy Agency is one of the leading suppliers of complementary massage therapists to businesses in the United Kingdom. CDR is internationally recognised throughout the pharmaceutical industry for its innovative computerised cognitive assessment system and research.

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Editors Notes:

Launched in 2002 with now over 300 therapists registered, The Therapy Agency is a national organisation that promotes reputable practitioners of complementary therapies to private and corporate clients. “We always interview, check qualifications and references, plus we always seek evaluations from previous clients as well as ongoing monitoring of current clients with each of our therapists” explains Jason. With the most sophisticated secure online search and booking facilities available in this business sector, clients can book preferred treatments 24/7, at home, or in their workplace.

Preview sample images for publication can be viewed on the website:

[www.therapy-agency.co.uk/about/press/downloads.html](http://www.therapy-agency.co.uk/about/press/downloads.html)

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## BRIEF OVERVIEW OF DATA FROM STUDY

### Methods

The data pre and post massage were analysed to see if any changes existed. Statistical testing was performed comparing the two sessions using analysis of variance.

### Mood and Alertness

There were large changes in two of the three factor scores. The first was in self-rated Alertness which increased following the massage (by 7 mm)*[in a 100mm scale]* which was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). Calmness showed a large increase also (12 mm)*[in a 100mm scale]*, which was highly statistically significant ( $p < 0.005$ ). Contentment did not change at all following the massage (0.08 mm).

### Cognitive Function

One of the major factor scores from the CDR system, Continuity of Attention, improved by 3.8 units, which was statistically significant ( $p < 0.05$ )*[which has a normal potential range from 0-95]*. This is bigger than the increase normally seen over two consecutive sessions (1.5 units). This improvement was largely driven by a notable increase in accuracy on the choice reaction time task ( $p = 0.016$ ), of 5%, compared to the increase of  $< 1\%$  normally seen over two consecutive sessions. There were no other changes of note in the performance data.

### Comments

The changes to mood are interesting, the absence of change in contentment compared to the marked increase in calmness strongly suggests this is a genuine change in calmness and not simply a more favourable questionnaire response. The improvement in performance reflected better ability to sustain attention, and this may be a direct consequence of the treatment. In relation to data from our database for the first two sessions performed by volunteers, the improvement to the accuracy of responding on the choice reaction task was more than five times greater, which may suggest it was related to the mood changes produced by the treatment. No other changes to the performance of the tasks were seen, suggesting that this effect was specific to attention, and did not involve memory processes.

In conclusion, this study identified improvements to alertness and calmness, which were accompanied by more accurate responding on a task requiring sustained attention.