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Location: [Mothership](#) -> [UFO](#) -> [Updates](#) -> [1999](#) -> [Apr](#) -> **Re: Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A**

## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A

From: **Brian Straight** <[brians@mdbs.com](mailto:brians@mdbs.com)>  
Date: Wed, 14 Apr 1999 13:56:23 -0500  
Fwd Date: Wed, 14 Apr 1999 16:15:43 -0400  
Subject: Re: Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A

>From: Jenny Randles <[nufon@currantbun.com](mailto:nufon@currantbun.com)>  
>To: UFO UpDates - [updates@globalserve.net](mailto:updates@globalserve.net)  
>Subject: Regression Hypnosis: Should Ufology Take A Stand?  
>Date: Wed, 14 Apr 1999 16:17:28 +0100

>I wanted to issue a  
>comment on a major policy in force in the UK, which does not  
>seem to have been adopted by any other country in the world  
>(save, to some extent, parts of Scandinavia). That is the  
>banning of the use of regression hypnosis as a viable way to  
>explore alleged abductions.

>But is it what proper UFOlogists should be doing? Are we not, in  
>fact, putting self interest ahead of what ought to be our  
>primary duty - witness responsibility? As a community should we  
>not be more willing to consider taking stands that may be tough  
>on some but necessary?

You raise some interesting questions, Jenny. I have discussed the value of hypnosis with a clinical psychologist friend of mine. He tells me that he is uncomfortable using it in his own clinical practice, and indeed does so only under extraordinary circumstances (one of which is that the patient him/herself sees it as the only way to continue progress and thus requests it. He never suggests hypnosis to his patients.

My own take on matters, after talking to him, is that hypnosis can indeed have a 'placebo' effect--if the patient thinks it will help, it very frequently does.

Now, when it comes to investigations and the recreation of events, it is possible that a similar effect may be experienced. That is, if a subject believes that hypnosis will aid recall, it may well do so.

However, research suggests that the reliability of memories recalled under hypnosis is highly suspect--after all, the subject is, to all intents and purposes, in a semi-dream state. Hypnosis will produce information, but we have no way of sorting what is reliable from what is unreliable. Hypnotic regressions of multiple witnesses to an event, where possible, can help to separate the signal from the noise, but such multiple experiences are relatively rare.

My own take on this is -- hypnosis should be performed only if the witness requests it (it should not, in my opinion, be suggested), and then only by a qualified clinical professional, in a controlled professional setting. The questioning should

avoid suggesting a narrative or explanation, and the ufologist should be aware that the information received from such sessions is highly suspect.

Hypnosis is not substitute for the mundane slog of good field work.

Brian

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