



## ★ Case Study Issue 108: Breaking the Migraine Pattern with The Bowen

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### Technique

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In April 2002, nine years-old James was brought for Bowen Technique treatment for the recurrent and distressing migraines he had suffered for some time.

He was afflicted by a migraine attack on average of one per month. The typical pattern began with the head pain and was followed, about an hour later, by vomiting, after which he would feel exhausted. James tended to get migraines on weekends or evenings, not during school time. They also seemed to be prompted by events such as holidays, Christmas or birthdays. The migraine reaction to the excitement could be either before or after the event.

The Bowen Technique is a gentle, non-intrusive therapy that can be given through light clothing, so treatment is not an alarming proposition. This is especially helpful when treating children.

James' first Bowen treatment was two weeks after a migraine. At follow up, one week later, his mother reported that the day after the treatment, she had to wake him up for school, which was unusual as he is always awake early. Otherwise, he was doing very well and had not had any hints of headache or migraine. I told his mother to bring him again as soon as he had any further migraines.

It was not until late September 2002 that James' mother rang for an appointment as he had had another migraine. So the pattern of one per month had been significantly changed and this was the first one in five months. After this single treatment, I didn't see James again until the end of November, two months later, when his mother reported that he had had a headache that did not develop into a migraine but she thought he should have a precautionary Bowen 'top-up'.

I did not see James again until early June 2003. He had had three migraines during April when his mother had been in hospital for a week's observation after some stroke-like symptoms. James had also had two more migraines in the four weeks after she came home and normal household life was being re-established. One Bowen treatment settled him again, and I did not see him again for eight months, until January 2004. During this time he had been fine – no headaches or migraines. Just prior to this visit, he had had two migraines but they were not as severe as the ones he used to have and he recovered more quickly from them.

As of November 2004, James has had only two migraines in the nine months since January and had one Bowen treatment after each. One, in March, seemed to be the direct result of a bump on the head at school. The change in his migraine pattern is continuing to improve, as they are certainly much less frequent, progressively less severe and James' recovery is faster each time.

46 year-old Tammy had been suffering up to three migraines per week since she was 17. Slim and blonde, the mother of grown children, Tammy's work in a doctor's surgery is often very high-pressured and stressful. She came for her first Bowen treatment in December 2003. Her immediate response was great relaxation and de-stressing. One week later, she hadn't had a single migraine or headache and had been 'ravenous' all week, eating a lot. One week later – her third treatment – she reported having a brilliant weekend after the last treatment but had had a painful migraine on the Monday. After this third treatment, the Christmas holidays intervened and I didn't see Tammy for three weeks, when I had scheduled a top-up treatment to make sure her migraine pattern stayed on the right track. Happily, she had been fine throughout the holidays, with only one threat of a migraine appearing on Christmas Eve, but she had just relaxed and closed her eyes and it had gone away. "It doesn't normally do that," she said. Upon returning to work after the holidays, she had experienced some 'niggles' which had not developed into migraines but, again, just went away on their own. She found drinking plenty of water beneficial also – something that probably all complementary therapists tell their patients.

Except for two migraines within three days of each other last March, Tammy did not have any migraines or significant headaches between December 2003 and September 2004.

This is a significant improvement in Tammy's well-known migraine pattern of nearly 30 years. Also playing a part in the positive response is the fact that Tammy and James have found, with The Bowen Technique, an effective tool that has dramatically changed their migraine pattern over a significant period of time.

In 2002 Bowen practitioner Nikke Ariff of the Bowen Therapists' European Register (BTER), conducted a small research programme<sup>1</sup> into the effect of Bowen on migraine. The results bear out the effectiveness of Bowen, with 79.5 per cent of the volunteers reporting a decrease in severity, frequency and/or in their migraines.

The factors that trigger migraines can be complex and include things such as hormones, sleeping patterns, head and neck pain, exercise, travel, lack of food, allergies, stress levels, etc. The Bowen Technique treats the individual as an integrated biodynamic system rather than treating an isolated complaint and can, therefore, prompt the multi-level resolution that migraine seems to require.

## References

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- 1 Ariff N. *The Bowen Technique National Migraine Research Program*. Mind Body Positive Ltd. London. 2002
  - 2 Baker J. *The Bowen Technique*. Corpus Publishing. Gloucestershire. UK. ISBN 1-903333-06-7. 2001.