



3rd Children's Complementary Therapy Network Conference

Childhood Conditions: Asthma, Eczema and Cerebral Palsy

The Children's Complementary Therapy Network (CCTN) held its 3rd successful conference on Saturday 17th May 2008 at the Birmingham Children's Hospital. The CCTN conferences provide a rare opportunity for medical professionals (e.g. doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, etc) and complementary therapists to learn and share knowledge and experience in the conventional and complementary therapy management of children. The focus of this year's conference was on the use of complementary therapies to help children with asthma, eczema and cerebral palsy. 86 people registered onto the conference from all over the UK and even one person from America.

The format of the conference was designed to promote an Integrated Medicine approach to the care of children with asthma, eczema and cerebral palsy. Specialists in conventional medicine gave an overview of each condition and the conventional treatments available for them. This was followed by complementary therapists highlighting aspects of complementary therapy approaches to children with such conditions.

The conference started with an overview of asthma by Dr Jane Clarke (Consultant and Clinical Lead in Paediatric Respiratory Medicine at Birmingham Children's Hospital). This was followed with an asthma case study presentation by Susan O'Shea (Homeopath). Alastair Rattray (Bowen Technique) presented several case studies of children with asthma that had responded dramatically to Bowen therapy. He also demonstrated the Bowen Release Move, which he has found particularly effective for children with asthma. Kelston Chorley (Osteopath) presented a pilot study he had done on the use of osteopathy for children with asthma. His presentation demonstrated some very useful ideas of how to do a research study.

The second topic covered was eczema. Arlene Brown (Senior Dermatology / Research Nurse at Birmingham Children's Hospital) gave an overview of eczema and its

conventional management. This was followed by a case study presentation by Dr Pankaj Shah (Children's Medical Officer at Freshwinds Charity) in which homeopathy, reflexology and base oil massage were integrated with the child's existing medical care with positive outcomes for the child and family.

Dr Margo Edwards (Consultant Community Paediatrician in the Children's Directorate, South Birmingham PCT and at the Birmingham Children's Hospital) gave an overview of cerebral palsy. Dr Maria Browning (Chiropractor) then presented a case review done by Joyce Miller (at the Anglo-European College of Chiropractic clinic) of 22 children with cerebral palsy who had accessed Chiropractic treatment. Elizabeth Calderara presented the case of a child with cerebral palsy who benefitted from a combination of Plantar Reflexology and Vertical Reflex Therapy. This was part of a bigger study she conducted at a community special school to see how reflexology could benefit children with special needs. Dr Anna Cheshire (Senior Researcher at Coventry University) presented a study funded by the charity Cerebra (for Brain Injured Children & Young People) that looked at adverse effects (direct and indirect) reported by the families of children who had had complementary therapies (she presented the subset of children with cerebral palsy from that study).

Dr Rhonda Lee (Vice President / Director Integrated Medicine at Freshwinds) concluded the day by highlighting important developments and initiatives for the CCTN.

Over the past year Dr Lee and Dr Shah have actively represented the CCTN in an initiative started by the PedCAM (Canadian Pediatric Complementary and Alternative Medicine Network - <http://www.pedcam.ca/>) to link together paediatric CAM networks from around the world, thereby creating an international network of networks for the advancement of Paediatric Integrated Medicine. Initially there was a meeting of American and Canadian Networks in Toronto in May 2007, at which Dr Lee and Dr Shah attended to represent the CCTN. Following this, there was a meeting in Exeter in December 2007 to bring together European networks. Representatives from the UK, Germany, Netherlands and Israel attended the Exeter meeting. There was a further meeting in Australia in March 2008 to bring together representatives from the Asian-Pacific region. These meetings have helped to clarify what people want from networks, which includes support around education, advocacy, research, clinical practice and networking.

Dr Lee then presented preliminary results from the CCTN autism questionnaire. This was a Network wide parent feedback questionnaire, launched at the 2nd CCTN Conference (2006), for the evaluation of the use of complementary therapies with children with autism. The questionnaire was designed to not only identify the impact on the child but also the impact on the family of the child having complementary therapies. Preliminary evaluation of the returned questionnaires suggests that there is benefit experienced by the children from having CAM therapies and that their parents/carers also benefitted as an indirect result of the child having had CAM therapies. The final evaluation of the autism questionnaire will be circulated once completed.

Finally, Dr Lee launched the latest initiative for the CCTN, namely to encourage parents to discuss with their doctors / medical teams about their use of complementary therapies for their children. The main thrust of this will be to disseminate as widely as possible a poster designed for this purpose. The poster was developed by the PedCAM network and CARE program (Complementary and Alternative Research and Education program) at the University of Alberta, and endorsed by CPS (The Canadian Paediatric Society) and AAP (American Academy of Pediatrics). The aim is to get the poster displayed in GP practices, hospitals, community clinics, health centres, patient / carer groups, complementary therapy practices, etc. The success of this initiative will be evaluated and presented at a future CCTN conference. One part of this evaluation will be to invite participants to present case studies of the impact of the poster. The poster will shortly be available for printing (free) from the CCTN web site (<http://cctn.freshwinds.org.uk/>). If you are interested in participating in this initiative please contact Dr Shah (cctn@freshwinds.org.uk or 0121 415 6670).

Advanced Notice

**The 4th CCTN conference
is planned for
Saturday 2nd May 2009**

Background of the CCTN

The CCTN was developed by Freshwinds in 2003 and now has over 270 network members from all over the UK, as well as the USA, Canada, Isle of Man, Germany, India and Ireland.

The network helps to support the use of complementary therapies for children by providing a common platform for medical and therapeutic professionals for the purposes of training, learning, educational and research opportunities, and clinical practice, in the field of integrated medicine and the use of complementary therapies for the benefit of children.

The aims of the network are to:

1. Enable therapists, clinicians and other professionals working with children to share and learn from each others experiences and knowledge.
2. Provide opportunities for education and learning geared towards working with children.
3. Develop guidelines for working with children.
4. Develop appropriate information resources on therapies for children and families to read.
5. Encourage coordinated evaluation and research about complementary therapies and children.

Membership of the CCTN is open to any professionals interested in the use of complementary therapies for children. Membership is free. Existing members include complementary therapists, doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, teachers, researchers and service developers.

The CCTN is part of the Children's Project at Freshwinds Charity, Birmingham UK (www.freshwinds.org.uk). The Children's Project is part of the charity's Integrated Medicine Project providing complementary therapies for adults and children with life-threatening and life-limiting health conditions using an Integrated Medicine model.

Developments within the Children's Complementary Therapy Network include:

The CCTN website (<http://cctn.freshwinds.org.uk>) – This is a rich source of information. Please take time to visit the site and put it into your favourites folder. Currently the web site is open access. The members' only section of the site is located separately as a Yahoo Group.

Network Conferences – Previous CCTN conferences have included: *“New Beginnings: Setting up a Children's Service”* (2005) and *“Complementary Therapies and Autism”* (2006). Please see the CCTN website for write-ups from these conferences (<http://cctn.freshwinds.org.uk/cctnconferences.htm>).

CCTN Yahoo Group – This is a Yahoo Group just for CCTN members. The function of the CCTN Yahoo Group is to facilitate sharing of knowledge and learning between CCTN members.

CCTN “Spotlight On” – The “Spotlight On” feature is an opportunity for CCTN members to let other members of the network know about their work by writing an article about their project or an aspect of their work, for distribution within the CCTN.

Complementary Therapies and Autism Questionnaire (2005-2008) – As described above.

Network Links (<http://cctn.freshwinds.org.uk/networklinks.htm>) – The CCTN has developed links nationally in the UK, as well as internationally with networks/groups in Canada, USA, Netherlands, Germany, Israel and others.

For further information about the CCTN and a membership application form to join the CCTN, please contact:

Web: <http://cctn.freshwinds.org.uk/>

E-mail: cctn@freshwinds.org.uk

Post: Dr Pankaj Shah, Children's Medical Officer,
Freshwinds, Prospect Hall, 12 College Walk, Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LE

Tel: 0121 415 6670