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LEARNING-DISABLED BOYS BENEFIT FROM BEADS

“I think that the boys learned that they could do things differently. They got over the point of compulsion.” So says Penny Mortensen, LPN, school nurse of Reed Academy, regarding the sustained changes seen after just six weeks of gold-plated magnetic beads on the ears of boys with serious behavioral health problems.

Reed Academy offers an intensive therapeutic environment for 24 boys with learning disabilities and emotional problems in Framingham, MA, explains Mortensen. Boys come to Reed Sunday evening through Friday and engage in intensive behavioral health and scholastic interventions, then return home on weekends.

Reed Academy conducted a pilot study based on anecdotal experience of Michael O. Smith, MD, DAC and others using a gold-plated magnetic bead placed on the back of the ear to treat attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) as well as a small trial in outpatient psychiatric clinics in the South Bronx (See *Guidepoints*, October 1999, February 2001). NADA trainers, Cindy Smith and Joanne Lenney have also explored the role of ear pellets in treating ADHD.

In the Reed study, fourteen parents consented to participate for six weeks of bead application, i.e. magnetized gold-plated pellets placed on the posterior of the ear opposite the point designated “Shen Men”. Acu detox practitioners use Shen Men on the front of the ear as part of the National Acupuncture Detoxification Association (NADA) treatment protocol. Parents also could opt to wear the pellets.

Reed gathered data on the boys prior to introducing the beads and again after six weeks using a one page behavioral rating scale -- a modified version of the Conners test typically used for ADHD. The scale asks for ratings from zero (no difficulty) to three (severe difficulty) on a variety of behaviors such as completion and concentration, patience, organization, impulse control and relationship difficulties. The simple form also gathers information on medication and its perceived benefit as well as the boys' significant strengths, talents and positive traits. Parents, teachers, nurses, child care workers and students all use the same form to document ratings. Mortensen asserts that the weekly scores from Reed more accurately reflect real change as they include

the perspectives from scholastic and the milieu/clinical staff evaluators as well as medical and parental perceptions.

Michael Smith wrote a paper with brief summaries of the score changes and behavioral improvements noted with the 13 boys. Most of the participants showed dramatic drops in rating scores. “Most of the boys seemed to have had a significant sustained improvement as a result of the bead use,” notes Smith. In discussing the tentative results of this study, Smith surmises that the beneficial effects appear to begin within the first week of treatment but continue for a sustained period, even years, with just six weeks of application. “The bead treatment seems to initiate a reparative process that does not necessarily need prolonged stimulation to be effective.”

Like NADA-style acupuncture for the treatment of addiction, the use of ear beads works in conjunction with Western medical and psychosocial interventions. Smith suggests that the intensive supportive environment at Reed Academy may help explain the dramatic results they found. Mortensen agrees.

Mortensen plans to begin after Spring vacation and run the study through the summer. One boy continues to wear the beads now because he finds them helpful, she adds. Mortensen adds that she developed an easy diagram and teaches the parents to place beads themselves if they are interested. Smith notes that the parents who wore beads on their own ears for three weeks reported noting a difference in stress management.

The Reed Academy study findings are preliminary and very promising. Without complicated research design or statistics, the findings indicated marked and lasting benefit from an inexpensive, easy, adjunctive therapy.

Overall the scores for boys with beads dropped considerably, many by more than half. Most of the boys take medications and no medication changes occurred during the study window. Participants generally had multiple diagnoses including ADHD, PTSD, bipolar, and Asperger’s syndrome. Change seemed to occur in all categories of behavioral, mental and emotional control. These changes, as well as relationship improvements, were seen at both the academy and at home.

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SAMPLE OUTCOME

A participant description from a paper offered by Smith at the NADA conference:

James (age 15) ADD, PDD (21-6) [pre and post trial scores] – greatly reduced excess movement and impulsive behavior; improved concentration; better at relationships; “I no longer feel the high energy that made me move all the time”; James asked to continue wearing the beads after the study was completed and still wears them one year later; his mother has felt unable to handle her son at home for the past six years, now she feels confident to have her son return home.

For other information concerning acupuncture in the treatment of addictions and mental disorders, contact *J&M Reports LLC, 7402 NE 58th St, Vancouver WA 98662-5207. (360) 254-0186. AcuDetox@AOL.com*

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This drawing was made by a 14-year old girl to her limited treatment with magnetic ear beads. She is a person with Down's Syndrome who attends a daily occupational therapy program in a New York City neighborhood. She made the drawing as part of her therapy in a "draw a picture of yourself" exercise.

The drawing on the back of this page is one she made five months later, also in the therapy session. In the interim, clinicians noted that she had made marked improvement in her mobility and in socializing with other children and adults.

10/19/99
10/19/99

October 1999
Before Treatment

A b m

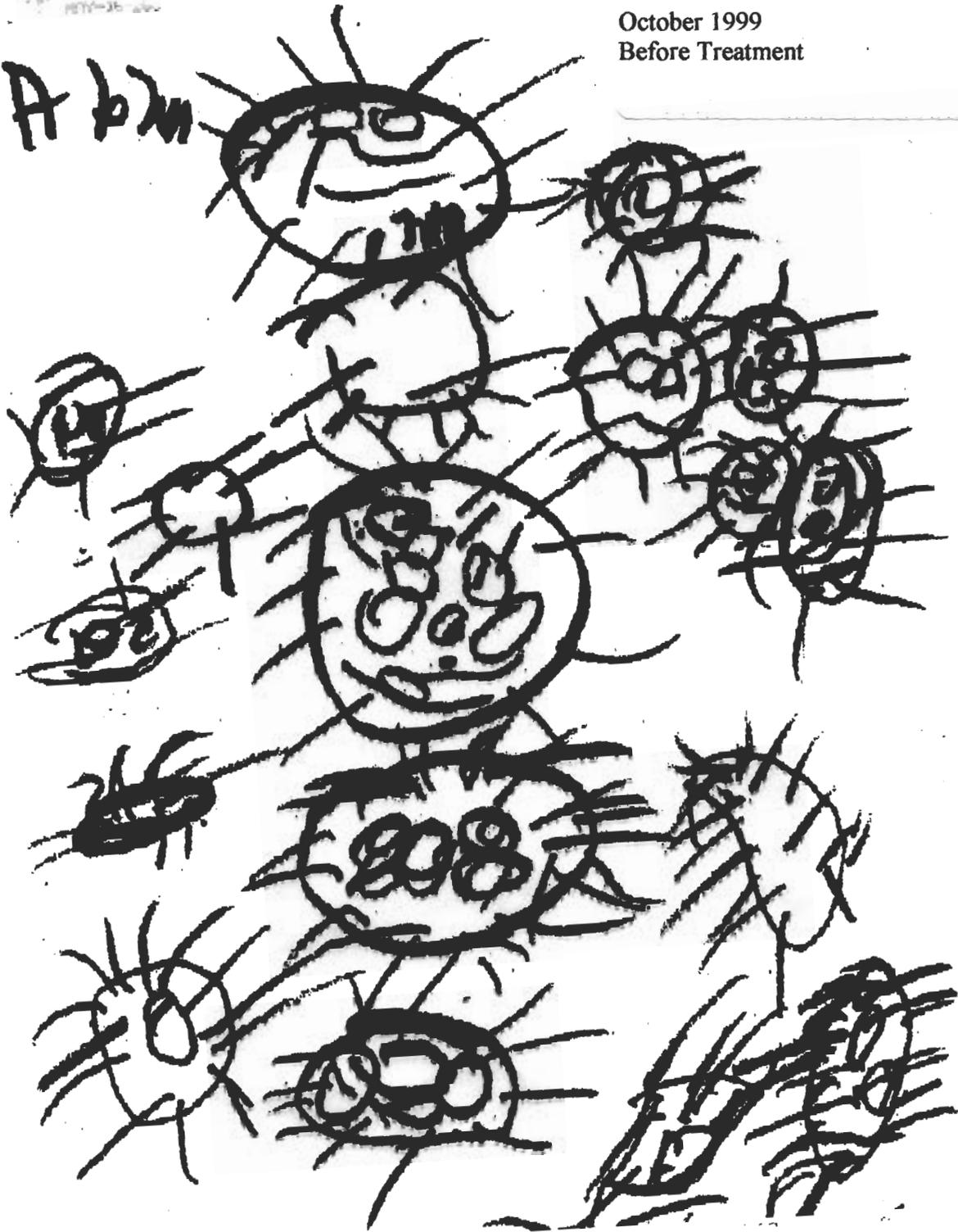


Figure 2

Five Months
After Treatment

