

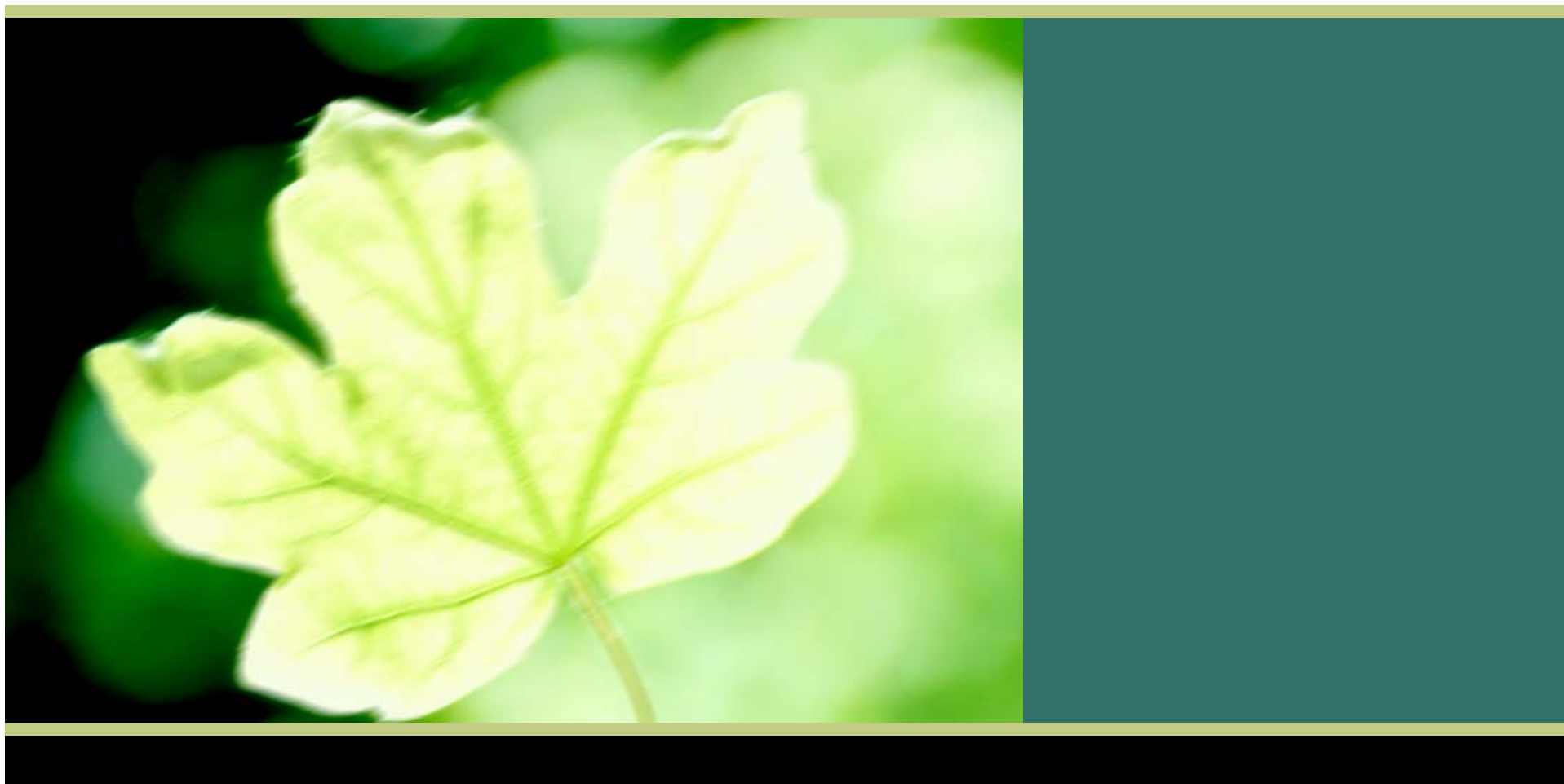
Alcoholics Anonymous

What does the science tell us

Feb.2010



HOMEWOOD
Health Centre





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*All wisdom is plagiarism;
only stupidity is original.*

Hugh Kerr

Theology Today 45:1 (April 1988)



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The great malady of the Twentieth Century, affecting us individually and socially, is “Loss of Soul”

When soul is neglected, it doesn't just go away; it appears symptomatically in obsessions, addictions, violence, and loss of meaning



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Demoralization

To be deprived of spirit, courage and hope:

to be despairing,

bewildered and alienated.



Paradoxes of Addiction

Abandonment

Alienation

Despair



Fear

Guilt

Shame

Accepting

Belonging

Respect/Hope



Freedom From:

Fear

Guilt

Shame





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Religious People Fear Hell

Spiritual People have been there



Overview

- Is AA efficacious.
- Is AA cost-effective?
- For whom is it helpful?
- Can clinicians influence the effectiveness of AA?



Let's look at science.

- Four meta-analytic reviews:
- Emrick et al 1993
- Tonigan et al 1996
- Kownacki et al 1999
- Ferri et al 2006



Findings

- Emrick 107 studies AA attendance and involvement of modest effect.
- Tonigan 74 studies Examined moderators of effectiveness I.e out-patient vs in-patient
- Studies were methodologically poor and underpowered.



Findings 2

- Ferri 2006 3417 patients in 8 RCTs.
- AA keeps folks in treatment longer
- Found to be as effective as other interventions eg CBT, MET, psychotherapy.



Findings 3

- Kownacki 1999 21 studies, controlled trials only.
- Coerced cases from courts confounds results.
- Good support for AA based treatment vs other modalities.



Project Match

- Largest psychotherapy RCT ever (N=1726)
- Examined feasibility of 12 step facilitation.
- Compared 3 treatment modalities;
 - CBT
 - MET
 - TSF

Match results.

- 71% more TSF abstinent at 1 year c/f CBT and MET.
- Effects mediated by on-going AA attendance.
- AA valuable adjunct to SUD treatment even when not formally emphasized.
- Those who attended AA groups had better outcomes.



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Match Results 2009(J.St Alc & Drugs)

- Patient profile not an indicator of success.
- Outcome better if AA-helping occurs.
- Helping increases self-efficacy.



Efficacy of AA

3,018 male veterans at 1 year follow-up:
AA attendance from months 9-12 was
associated with;

more abstinence.

Freedom from substance use
problems. Freedom from
distress and psychiatric symptoms.

More
employment.

Oumette et al, 1998.



Efficacy of AA.

The number of AA meetings attended during the first 3 years was positively related to:

- Remission of alcohol problems.
- Lower levels of depression.
- Higher quality relationships.

Humphrey et al, 1997.



Women in AA

- Women appear to attend and benefit as much as men.
- Unclear whether women- only meetings(common in AA) benefit women more.
- Unclear whether other women-specific groups(Women for Sobriety)may improve outcomes for women



Effectiveness Studies 1

- Multi-site VA study (N=3698)
- Patients treated in 12 step programmes more likely abstinent at 1 year.
- At least twice weekly attendance at AA reduced likelihood of relapse.
- Many others found same
Kissin, 2003, Kelly
2006, Miller, 1997, Moos, 2004, 2006.





Effectiveness 2

- OP study (N=2029), Miller, 1997 found:
- Most powerful predictor of outcome was 12 step meeting attendance.



Effectiveness 3

- Long term, prospective 8yr study (N=466);
- AA- more abstinence and less problems c/f professional treatment.
- Those choosing AA only, fare better than untreated as well as those professionally treated.



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To Summarise.

- Studies increased methodological rigor in the past 10 years.
- Evidence for both efficacy and effectiveness reveals consistent benefits if involvement in AA.



Cost-effectiveness 1

- In US increases in AA membership and alcohol treatment accounts for all decreases in deaths and 40% of cirrhosis admissions.
- Healthcare cost-offset implications are substantial.(Smart and Mann,1993)

Cost-effectiveness 2

- 3yr.prospective study(Humphreys,1996)
AA had 45% lower costs c/f out-patient treatment.
- Cost savings per patient were \$2440 treated with 12 step treatment c/f CBT.
- Multi site VA sample(Humphreys 2001) showed 64% higher annual cost for CBT c/f AA.



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A.A. is a “sophisticated psychosocial form of treatment that addresses human psychological vulnerabilities that alcoholics and others share related to problems of self-regulation.”

Khantzian and Mack



Clinician Guidelines

- Learn the 12 steps and principles.
- Learn the language and culture.
- Distinguish religion and spirituality.
- Address myths associated with 12 steps.
- Help clients find appropriate groups.
- Encourage active membership.
- Encourage long-term attendance.





Twelve Step Principles

1. Honesty
2. Hope
3. Faith
4. Courage
5. Integrity
God
6. Willingness
7. Humanity
8. Brotherly Love
9. Discipline
10. Perseverance
11. Awareness of
12. Service



What does this mean for me?

- Develop a daily self-assessment ritual.
- What principle of the 12 principles do I need to think/act upon today.
- Find a mentor who is honest and whose values/attitude mirror yours.
- Talk with this mentor daily.
- Begin and keep a journal.
- Give it away!



Recovery Questions

Have you a Sponsor?

- Name/Gender
- Phone Number
- Contact

Are you attending 12 Step Meetings?

- Location
- Frequency
- Home Group
- Open or Closed
- Activity within Group



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Recovery Questions

What Place in your Life is Prayer Playing?

What other Groups are you Attending?

Are you

- Reading?
- Journalizing?

Two Characteristics of Recovery from alcoholism and other addictions are:

1. The ability to manage the stress of living without the support of dependence-producing drugs.
2. The ability to be around dependence-producing drugs without experiencing craving or engaging in drug-seeking behaviour.

Helpful Resources.

- “Alcoholics Anonymous”, 4th edition, 2002.
- “Twelve step facilitation therapy manual”, NIAA, U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services. 1998.
- “12 Steps and 12 Traditions”, New York, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952.
- “Living Sober” New York, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1975.



Some Simple Principles

- How to catch a monkey and learn to let go.
- Don't take things personally.
- Don't let people, places or things live rent-free in your head.
- A finger pointed in blame has three pointing back at the blamer.
- You're granny did know best.
- Have some crazy dreams.

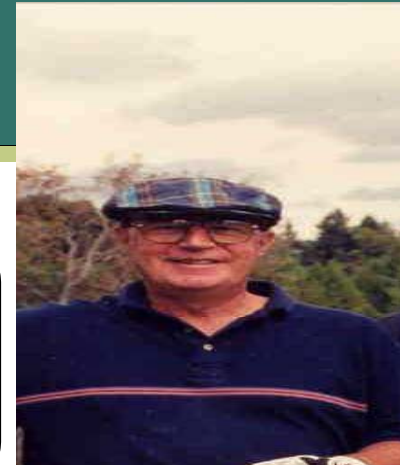


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**Hey! Wait for
Me - I'm Coming**



It's My Turn!



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**The world breaks everyone. Some
mend stronger in the broken places.**

Hemmingway.



A Serenity Prayer for Physicians

- “God grant me the serenity to accept the people I cannot change, the courage to change the person I can, and the wisdom to know that that’s me.”

Cunningham, 2003.



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IN CLOSING

- Wisdom is the perfect blending of intelligence and love.

“Sermon on the Mount”

Emmet Fox.



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