



DEER LODGE CENTRE

Making lives better

Research Project Summary

Code: DLC- 09-301

Subject areas: **Stress, Biofeedback, Military**

Title	Does the Stress Eraser Reduce Anxiety in a Military Population: A Pilot Study.
Overview	<p>Currently, there is ample evidence to suggest that many psychiatric disorders (such as anxiety) are characterized physiologically by autonomic imbalance (Berntson and Cacioppo 2004; Mussgay and Ruddel 2004; Thayer et al. 1996; Watkins et al. 1999), or an imbalance between the body's response to stress and the body's response to relaxation. An effective strategy known to reliably reduce autonomic imbalance is slow diaphragmatic breathing (Schipke et al. 1999; Strauss-Blasche et al. 2000; Tripathi 2004). Although this is an effective relaxation technique, there are several limitations to this method including; there is no way to ensure that one is breathing correctly, relaxation therapies often generate low compliance rates (Cox et al. 1988; Lehrer and Woolfolk 2007) and self-reports (which are typically overstated) are poor indicators of actual compliance (Taylor et al. 1983). A solution to these limitations is to use Biofeedback techniques, such as the Stress Eraser (developed by Helicor, full description of this instrument attached), which not only provides direct feedback, but also non-invasively records the activity to ensure deep breathing is being implemented. This pilot project would like to test the effectiveness of the stress eraser in reducing anxiety levels in a Canadian military population. We believe that by giving someone insight into what is occurring physiologically when they are anxious will help regulate this response. This in-turn will have a positive influence on their emotional well being, as well as the emotional well being of their spouses or other family members.</p>
Objectives	To test the effectiveness of the Stress Eraser in a Canadian Military Population.
Principal Investigator	Chris J. Enns & Cassandra A. Adduri
Affiliation	Deer Lodge Centre, Operational Stress Injury Clinic.
Location	DLC, OSI Clinic.

Subject area	Stress, Biofeedback, Military
Methodology	Participants will be instructed to use the Stress Eraser for 20 minutes a day for at least three days a week for four weeks. The participants will fill out an Anxiety questionnaire once every other week.
Project timelines	6 months
Potential benefit	If this study shows that clients at the OSI clinic enjoy using the Stress Eraser, and report that it is facilitating with relaxation, a larger more controlled study will be implemented. In this larger study, the control group will consist of participants using deep breathing techniques without the use of biofeedback techniques. The results of this study also have clinical implications. For example, Gottman (1999) showed that the management of the autonomic nervous systems (ANS) assists in the resolution of marital distress. If clients find the Stress Eraser useful, this could be an instrument that aids couples in managing their ANS.
Status	Ongoing
Publications	None as of Yet
Last summary update	March 2009