

WORLD SMILE DAY

Smiling is one of those small actions that can positively impact your health. Indeed, sciences showed that smiling increases your oxytocin level, a hormone with many helpful effects. Among others, oxytocin acts as a neurotransmitter in the brain, i.e. for its actions on sociability.

The happier people are, the higher their level of oxytocin tends to be. The feeling of joy and even euphoria that people with high levels of oxytocin experience in social contacts is due to an increase in brain levels of beta-endorphins induced by oxytocin. A beta-endorphin is similar to morphine, the drug that makes people ecstatic. However, oxytocin is a much safer way to get happy as it does not harm you at normal levels - within the reference ranges of 1 to 21 picograms per milliliter.

The adolescent girl who smiles again

Anna was a thirteen-year old member of my family. She had everything she needed to be happy. She was fond of sports and received all the support from her parents for her passion: sport. She had the financial and technical support, including daily transport to and from her elite sports' club, as well as time consumed in supporting her in her sports contest. Yet, she did not seem happy. Where was her little smile hiding?

For two, three years she gradually had become asocial, losing her circle of friends, feeling alone at school, progressively preferring the company of animals to that of her friends. However, even in the company of animals, something was wrong. She could quickly lose patience and burst out irritated and angry at her pets, as if it was the fault of the cat or the horse that her day was spoiled. It seemed that even the animals she loved did not make her happy any more. She used to tease her youngest sister gently, but nowadays the teasing had become nonstop and much too aggressive. With her parents discipline got to be a problem, although they had a good balance of strict discipline and warm-heartedness towards her. She contested everything and snapped back more aggressively than ever before. Her parents had thought that it was the 'adolescent crisis', and looked a little stoically at what was happening, pondering on the future. They were worried that she did not look happy anymore

despite whatever they did to please her. Even in her sports club she was becoming isolated. Her father remarked that she experienced great difficulties to make observations to her trainer and discuss urgent problems for the training, as if she was too shy or too timid to speak. She seemed afraid of losing his support by disclosing something that might unease him, although he was the friendly type, open to suggestions. As her father had suffered from a terrible depressive crisis when he was young, her mother feared that their daughter had inherited from her father a bad gene that brings depression. I knew Anna well, and saw her becoming irritated or quiet in the company of others, easy quarreling with her youngest sister. She was often alone, and worst of all she was not happy. Her smile seemed to be forced.

As oxytocin deficiency seems to be rampant in my family, with the introvert, socially more isolated attitudes that some members of my family may have, I talked to her about my suspicion that this might be the case for her too. I proposed her to try a quarter of tablet of oxytocin a day. Her parents agreed in the hope that a happy solution might be on the way.

The effect of the oxytocin surprised her family completely. On the very first day of morning of medication intake, her father saw the effects when he was driving her back home from her sports club in the late afternoon. Anna, who usually was sitting silently and uncommunicating in the car, was now smiling. Her smile was wonderful. She talked most of the time on the trip back home, warm-heartedly, as if something magic had happened. When she arrived home, she explained with warmth about her day to her mother, something she had not done for a very long time. She teased her sister in a friendly manner and with good humor, so much so that even the younger girl was enthusiastic. Something had definitely happened to her.

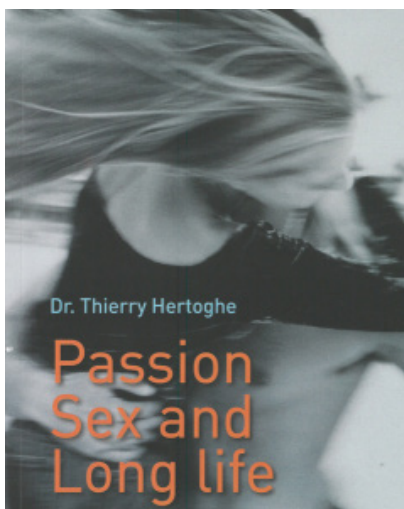


Was it the oxytocin? Can oxytocin improve adolescent behavior? I believe it was the oxytocin because Anna continues to become extrovert, happier and friendlier each day she takes oxytocin. It had a direct effect on her from the first day she took it, a sign that her oxytocin depletion was severe. But, as soon as she forgets to take oxytocin for two or three days, she becomes once again more distant to others, less happy. The dose of oxytocin had to be reduced to an eighth of a tablet a day as she found herself to be sleepy in the morning after

taking a quarter of a 10 international unit tablet– a sign the medication was excessive. Nevertheless, she told me later, that despite the sleepiness she had experienced in the morning by taking an excess dose, on the afternoon of the first day of oxytocin intake, that she who disliked school and her school mates, had found it great to be there, charmed to be in the company of her classroom pupils during playtime breaks. How many unhappy adolescents might be oxytocin deficient?

Table 1: Oxytocin beneficial effects

Psychosocial	Physical	Sexual	End of pregnancy (and periods afterwards)
Sociability	Protection against ischemia (vasodilatation)	Sexual arousal and drive	
Kindness	Blood pressure reduction	Vaginal or glans penis lubrication	Delivery (stimulates uterine contractions)
Attachment Deeper affective bonds Love	Muscle relaxation Pain relief	Increase in penis/clitoris sensitivity to sexual to sexual contact	Breastfeeding (milk ejection)
			Sexual (in men only)
Happiness	Appetite reduction	Women: orgasms Men: Ejaculation	Yawning, sleepiness after intercourse Forgetfulness after intercourse
Better mood Anxiety reduction, especially for social contacts	Possible prevention of breast, ovarian and prostate cancer	Increased orgasm pleasure	Sperm release



Passion, Sex and Long life: The incredible Oxytocin Adventure

This general public book focuses on possibly one of the most important hormones for humans. Discover why many people might need to be supplemented with oxytocin, a hormone not only related to orgasms but also to tender love, attachment, friendliness, passion and many more matters.

All aspects of detection and treatment of oxytocin deficiency are explained in the book alongside abundant scientific literature supporting this information.



Dr HERTOGHE MEDICAL SCHOOL