
Abstract: The authors developed a technique, which they call hypnotherapeutic olfactory conditioning (HOC), for exploiting the ability of scents to arouse potent emotional reactions. During hypnosis, the patient learns to associate pleasant scents with a sense of security and self-control. The patient can subsequently use this newfound association to overcome phobias and prevent panic attacks. This may be especially effective for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with episodes of anxiety, flashbacks, and dissociation triggered by smells. The authors present 3 cases, patients with needle phobia, panic disorder, and combat-induced PTSD who were successfully treated with the HOC technique.