



LUMINOTHERAPY

Light therapy is a psychiatric treatment offered for depression, circadian rhythm disturbances, and insomnia. It consists of exposing the eyes to light of specific intensity and light spectrum close to sunlight.

Origin

The therapeutic use of natural light in medicine dates back to the end of the 19th century. Its remarkable effect on the stimulation of the immune system and the fight against infections led to the development of the first techniques of light therapy, rewarded, in 1903, by the Nobel Prize for physiology or medicine given to the Danish doctor Niels Ryberg Finsen. In France, the technique was popularized in the 1920s, among others by Jean Saidman, creator of famous revolving solariums in Aix-les-Bains, Vallauris and Jamnagar (India) 1, and by the Biancani brothers.

The discovery of penicillin and mass vaccination campaigns made this approach less promising and it was almost forgotten.

It was not until 1984 that the use of light therapy in clinical psychiatry made its first appearance to treat seasonal depression. This discovery is made by Norman E. Rosenthal and his colleagues at the National Institute of Mental Health in the United States.

For more than twenty years, several researchers around the world have explored this path for the treatment of seasonal depression, sleep disorders and even non-seasonal depression³. But despite spectacular results, the recognition of this technique was extremely long, to the point of discouraging some researchers. Dr. Lam, author of a large Canadian study on the subject, said: "It is a shame that so many people cannot access light therapy, just because doctors do not know what it is. treatment ".

It was not until 2005, after 20 years of indifference but faced with the evidence of the effectiveness of the treatment, that American colleges and professional associations of psychiatry finally officially recognized light therapy as an effective, first-line treatment. , against depression, certain sleep disorders, fatigue in multiple sclerosis and in Parkinson's disease, the elderly and senile dementia, Alzheimer's disease.