



Research changes view of anorexia

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HAPPY and glowing with health, Laura Beverley (below) is chasing her dream to shine as an actor.

Diagnosed as anorexic at 12, Ms Beverley took part in a treatment program that challenges the view that mental illness is the cause of eating disorders.

Convinced psychological problems are instead caused by the body starving, a team of international scientists used heat therapy to prevent calorie loss, reduced exercise, monitored meals and reduced or stopped psychoactive drugs.

Seventy five per cent of the 1428 patients treated in six clinics, including Melbourne's Mandometer Clinic, were in remission after a year, the Swedish research said. Just 10 per cent relapsed after five years. In contrast, about 50 per cent of patients enter remission through conventional treatments, they claim.

"Our research found that calorie restriction through di-

eting causes eating disorders due to the dopamine response that initiates a feeling of reward," said Dr Cecilia Bergh, whose findings were published in *Behavioural Neuroscience*.

"This in turn prompts further dieting that can lead to

anorexia nervosa and binge eating.

"The research shows that psychological problems are the consequence of the eating disorder and so treatment programs need to address this."

She said the program had no mortalities.

Ms Beverley, now 20, said she had been hospitalised and tube fed before trying the Mandometer method at 13.

"I wasn't responding to treatments and that is when my parents started researching places elsewhere," she said.

"I went to the San Diego clinic for six months and while I was there I made a dream board about what I wanted to do with my life and mine was all pictures of acting. Now I am

pursuing acting and also studying photography."

Nearly a million Australians are affected by eating disorders. But the nation's peak eating disorder group, The Butterfly Foundation, warned any treatment program that did not recognise eating disorders as serious mental illness was concerning.

Butterfly CEO Christine Morgan said: "Recovery from an eating disorder is determined when physical symptoms and underlying mental illnesses are addressed."

