

SUNDAY NORTH

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Q&A: CECILIA BERGH, *Founder, Mandometer Inc.*

Cecilia Bergh is the founder of the Mandometer Clinic, an inpatient/outpatient eating disorder treatment facility that will open Sept. 20 in Rancho Bernardo. It will be the first U.S. eating disorder clinic to use the Mandometer treatment program. The program was developed at the Karolinska Institute and has been used in Sweden for 13 years. Bergh is from Sweden.

Explain the basis of the Mandometer treatment program.

We have proved that psychiatric symptoms — depression, anxiety and obsessions — of all eating disorder patients are consequences of the starvation or binge eating rather than preceding the illness. In the same way, when you are highly emaciated, you get a very low pulse. Then we suggest that the following symptoms should be treated — the eating behavior, the altered perception of society, the hypothermia, hyperactivity and their distorted social life. We treat anorexics, bulimics and those with eating disorders not otherwise specified all in the same way. We track their eating behavior by using a device called a Mandometer. “Mando” means “I eat” in Latin.



Explain how the device works.

The device consists of a scale connected to a computer. The patient puts her plate on the scale, puts food on the plate and the computer stores the weight loss of the plate during the meal and generates the curve of eating rate.

And then, at regular intervals, the patient determines satiety and points at the touch screen and the computer stores the satiety rating. The machine guides them through their meals, telling them how much they eat, how fast they eat, how much they should put on the fork. It doesn't tell them about the calories, because we avoid the preoccupation with calories. We create curves for them — one for eating rate and one for satiety. And the patient is asked to follow these curves during the meal.

Are outpatients able to take the device home with them?

Yes, they would have one at home too. They can carry it in their backpack. It's about one pound.

Why did you choose to open the first U.S. Mandometer Clinic in Rancho Bernardo?

Louis Maletz, a physician in Rancho Bernardo, had heard about it and was very curious and got in touch with us. He came and saw the clinic and decided he wanted to bring this to the United States. Since he was located here, it was very natural to start it here. He is the medical director.

How long does the average treatment last?

The average treatment time is 12 months. And there are remission criteria that the patient has to follow. If they meet all these criteria, we say that the patient is in remission. And then we follow them for five years with medical checkups.

How much does it cost to go through the Mandometer treatment program?

It depends on the severity. I said the average treatment time is 12 months, but the patient can recover in four months. It will be about half of the cost of traditional treatment.

How many employees will work at the clinic?

There will be around 10 people working here to start. We will have Dr. Maletz, a pediatrician, a psychiatrist, an internist connected to Pomerado Hospital. We will have a dietitian, we will have case managers and we will have nurses as well as a hairdresser and makeup artist.

— Nicole Reino