



# Getting full treatment

Lachlan Hastings

Researchers treating eating-disorder sufferers at an Aussie clinic say their pioneering approach offers fresh hope to those battling conditions such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.

Mandometer Clinic founders Cecilia Burgh and Per Sodersten consider psychological problems to be a result rather than a cause of eating disorders and instead teach their patients how to eat normally again.

A team of international scientists headed by the duo claims to have achieved a 75 per cent success rate from a treatment program using the method that

involving 1428 people at six clinics, including one at Brighton in Melbourne.

The findings, which the researchers compare with other programs that achieve a success rate of less than 50 per cent, have been published in the journal *Behavioural Neuroscience*.

Sodersten, a professor at Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, said only 10 per cent of patients suffered a relapse in five years of follow-up consultations.

"Relapse has traditionally been considered a big problem and we have actually we don't

have that much," he told *mX*.

Sodersten said the main feature of the clinic's approach was a focus on the disordered eating.

"We teach patients how to resume normal eating behaviour and how to restore their feelings of fullness," he said.

"This in turn normalises the biology of the patient, so the idea is that she or he will get in touch with their normal biological signals for hunger."

They also use heat therapy, exercise and computerised meal monitoring to restore normal social habits and wean patients off

psychoactive drugs.

Former patient Ramone, 31 of Melbourne, who asked that her last name not be used, said she had struggled with eating disorders since she was a teenager but now felt "fantastic".

"I've had a whole year of unravelling all sorts of self-destructive behaviours and abnormal thoughts and all that stuff that comes with suffering an eating disorder," she said.

"Relearning all of that through the (Mandometer) program was needless to say very, very difficult but very beneficial."