

FirstLine Therapy: A clinically tested, science based approach for transforming the health of your patients and your practice

Helping clients to lose fat and change eating and lifestyle habits that are driving them to early graves just got easier, with the FirstLine Therapy training package. Naturopath **Ben Brown, ND**, introduces the new certification course.

In the United Kingdom, every hour, someone dies from cardiovascular disease. Collectively chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity affect more people and claim more lives than any other illnesses in the world. (1) Chronic diseases represent an incredible burden to the individuals affected, their family, loved ones and to our society. Remarkably, we live in a culture where costly and risky approaches such as drugs and surgery are considered conventional care for sufferers of chronic disease, yet safe solutions to the problem, nutritional therapy and lifestyle change are often labelled as radical therapies.

Perhaps at no point in our history has been it more important to remind ourselves of the fact that low cost, low risk, simple dietary and lifestyle changes have the power to prevent and reverse the major chronic diseases.

If we are to meaningfully impact the chronic disease epidemic, we need to shift our view of health care from one focused on acute disease management to one that deals with the real problem of improving people's health and wellbeing and preventing disease. It is very clear that therapeutic lifestyle change (TLC) has the power to prevent, manage and even reverse chronic disease. (1,2,3,4) In fact accumulating evidence and several best practice guidelines suggest TLC should be the first line therapy (first choice of therapy) for diseases such as:

- Elevated Cholesterol
- Elevated Blood Pressure
- Type 2 Diabetes
- Insulin Resistance or Metabolic Syndrome
- Overweight and Obesity
- Osteoarthritis
- Osteoporosis
- Aging related disease (6-14)

In response to the chronic disease epidemic, a team of leading scientists and clinicians have formulated the FirstLine Therapy certification and training course. FirstLine Therapy incorporates cutting edge dietary and lifestyle behaviour modification strategies with an easy to integrate clinical format that makes coaching and empowering patients to positive change an easily achievable reality.

The FirstLine Therapy training course is specifically designed help clinicians effectively coach and empower patients in healthy lifestyle behaviours such as stress management, healthy eating, exercise and the use of nutritional supplements with the end goal of optimising the patient's health and promoting optimal wellbeing and vitality into old age (see figure 1, below).

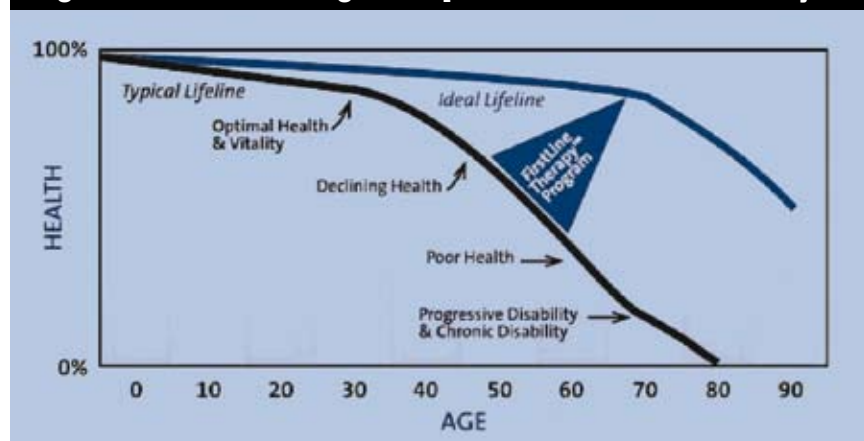
The FirstLine Therapy approach has been strengthened by human clinical studies and ongoing scientific research. A recent review of existing scientific support for the program appeared in the June 2009 edition



of the peer reviewed journal *Metabolic Syndrome and Related Disorders*. (15) In this article the authors summarise a decade of clinical refinement of the FirstLine Therapy approach as well as a series of peer reviewed publications supporting not only the effectiveness but ease and practicality of this unique approach to chronic disease management.

More recently, Nutri announced the launch of the FirstLine Therapy programme in the United Kingdom and are now making available, for the first time, a certification and training course in FirstLine Therapy to UK-based health professionals. The FirstLine Therapy course has been a highly successful

Figure 1: Understanding the impact of Nutrition and Lifestyle



→ and popular programme in several other countries for a number of years where it has been utilised and implemented by a range of health care professionals and in settings such as medical clinics and nutritionally orientated practices. Before the official launch of FirstLine Therapy, Nutri conducted a proof of principle training, from which a small number of therapists have taken these concepts into their practices and the community.

While the impact of peer reviewed publications is undoubtedly large, it is often the face-to-face clinical impact that is more meaningful on a personal level. Christine Bailey, MSc, PGCE, is enjoying great success using FirstLine Therapy in her practice.

Recently a patient of hers, initially motivated by increasing weight and cardiovascular risk experienced a transformation in their health. The patient (a 42-year-old male) now not only has a greatly improved series of disease risk factors (see table 1) but a changed outlook,


Table 1: Results at 14 weeks

Parameter	Before	After	Result
Weight	106.1kg	89.7kg	16.4
BMI	36.1	30.5	(obese to overweight)
Fat Mass%	33%	27%	Decrease
Muscle Mass%	36.9%	39.9%	Increase
Waist circumference	117.5cm	106cm	11.7cm
Blood pressure	130/92	>120/80	Normal

including a sense of clarity, greater energy, increased motivation and a passion for healthy living.

This case example serves as an important reminder that although patients may be motivated by pressing health problems, significant dietary and lifestyle change often has an impact beyond simply reducing disease risk, with people experiencing a level

of wellness and exuberance for life they may have never experienced before.

Importantly, healthy patients translate to a healthy and sustainable practice. Arguably everyone could benefit from effective coaching in dietary and lifestyle change. In this respect FirstLine Therapy is not only an approach for disease management but for keeping people well. As most therapists know, it is our satisfied and healthy patients that are our best source of advertising. Healthy patients mean a healthy and busy practice. 

* Disclosure: Ben Brown is a consultant for Nutri, distributors of the FirstLine Therapy system in the UK.

* Case study supplied by Christine Bailey, MSc, PGCE, Nutritionist and UK based Certified FirstLine Therapy Practitioner: christinembailey@hotmail.com, www.thefoodandhealthadvisor.co.uk.

*To learn more about FirstLine Therapy, contact Nutri on Free phone 0800 212 742, flt@nutri.co.uk or www.nutri.co.uk.

Therapeutic lifestyle change on trial

Latest study to show the powerful benefits of a FLT-type programme was published this year in the journal *Metabolic Syndrome and Related Disorders*. The authors, including nutritional biochemist Dr Jeff Bland, PhD, concluded:

Lifestyle modification, including changing dietary regimen, has been shown to have a positive effect on reducing the incidence of metabolic syndrome and type 2 diabetes.

In an attempt to address metabolic syndrome from a nutritional perspective, we developed an easy-to-follow dietary programme in our medical clinic that incorporated foundational concepts such as low glycaemic load and leveraging the anti-inflammatory whole foods pattern high in phytochemicals representative of the healthful Mediterranean diet. To enhance compliance and discourage overeating, the diet was modified further to exclude added sugars and limit grain intake. In addition to focusing on the constituents of the diet, individuals were counselled on their meal frequency and on eating mindfully to ensure that blood sugar remained stable throughout the day and that they invested time and attention in eating.

Clinical research on this programme coupled with modest exercise demonstrates beneficial effects on the diagnostic criteria of metabolic syndrome. Further studies are needed to determine its long-term effect on the incidence of type 2 diabetes and CVD in individuals with metabolic syndrome.

* Schiltz B et al. A science-based, clinically tested dietary approach for the metabolic syndrome. *Metab Syndr Relat Disord*. 2009 Jun;7(3):187-92



About the author

Throughout his career Benjamin Brown, ND, has maintained a clinical naturopathic practice, worked in research and development for Metagenics, lectured internationally on natural medicine, conducted training courses and authored numerous articles. Currently he is consultant to Nutri Ltd, heading their continuing professional education programme.

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