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Yi Ren medical Qigong for chronic back pain - A feasibility study on the implementation of Qigong exercises in the elderly population suffering from chronic back pain

Statement of the Problem: Chronic Back Pain (CBP) is a common symptom bothering the elderly population seeking medical care. The most common strategy suggested for the relief of this condition is pharmacological and causes harmful side effects. Yi Ren Medical Qigong (YRMQ) has demonstrated that just one single application of this gentle exercise could reduce chronic pain in elderly people. The objective of this clinical trial was to evaluate the effectiveness of Qi therapy in decreasing pain or discomfort.

Methodology & Theoretical Orientation: A group of seven participants with CBP took part in weekly one-hour group Qigong sessions in addition to practicing a shorter version of the exercises at home twice a week. Pain intensity was evaluated using a Visual Analog Scale (VAS), showing reduction of symptoms. Other assessment tools such as the Roland Morris Disability Questionnaire (RMDQ) and the Brief Pain Inventory (BPI) scales were used to measure the pain reduction over the course of the 5-week trial.

Findings: The participants were very motivated and most of them attended without missing a week. The mean adjusted low back intensity using the assessment tools showed significant reduction. No serious or life-threatening adverse effects were found.

Conclusions & Significance: Qigong has proven to provide at least in the short term some reduction of pain and pain medication use. Our preliminary efficacy results were consistent with previous Qigong studies showing improvement of back pain via assessment score changes, but not enough significant statistical evidence relevant to prove replicable efficacy of the proposed exercises. Conducting a 5-week pilot trial of Qigong exercises for an elderly population sample with CBP was moderately feasible.

Biography

Nathalie Guillaume DAOM, LAc received her Clinical Doctorate in Pain Management & Oncology from Bastyr University. She has done advanced rotations in China where she had extensive Orthopedic and Cancer Care training at Long Hua Traditional Chinese Medicine Hospital in Shanghai and Sichuan Integrative Eastern and Western Hospital in Chengdu. Her experience in the performing arts has influenced her interest in a creative approach to the clinical practice using lifestyle changes, nutrition, movement therapy and meditation as medicine. She has extensively researched the therapeutic benefits of Medical Qigong in chronic back pain and is dedicated to promoting the benefits of holistic health to the community through education and service. She is currently Adjunct Faculty for the Graduate School of Oriental Medicine at the New York College of Health Professions and practices in New York City where she is the CEO and Medical Director of Healing Happy Hour.

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