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Integrating traditional manual therapy with modern physiotherapeutic techniques in post-stroke rehabilitation: A Guatemalan experience

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Statement: Stroke remains one of the leading causes of adult disability worldwide, with developing nations like Guatemala facing unique challenges in post-stroke rehabilitation due to limited resources and accessibility. This study explores the integration of traditional Guatemalan manual therapy practices with contemporary physiotherapy approaches to improve functional recovery in post-stroke patients.

Methodology: A clinical observational study was conducted at a rehabilitation center in Guatemala City over a period of 9 months. A total of 30 adult stroke survivors (3–12 months post-incident) were selected and divided into two groups: Group A received standard physiotherapy including range of motion exercises, neurodevelopmental training, and gait therapy; Group B received a combination of standard physiotherapy and traditional manual therapy, which included indigenous techniques focused on pressure point stimulation, passive limb mobilization, and localized herbal compresses. Each group underwent therapy sessions thrice weekly for 10 weeks. Assessments were conducted using the Modified Rankin Scale (mRS), Barthel Index, and patient-reported quality of life surveys at baseline and upon completion.

Conclusion: The integration of traditional manual therapy with modern physiotherapy significantly enhanced functional outcomes in Group B, with improved mRS and Barthel Index scores compared to the control group. Patients also reported a higher level of satisfaction, reduced muscle stiffness, and better emotional well-being. The findings suggest that culturally informed hybrid rehabilitation models can be effective, affordable, and well-received in low-resource settings. This approach holds promise for broader implementation across Latin America and similar healthcare landscapes.

Biography

Ana Lucía Mendoza, a physiotherapist and rehabilitation specialist from Guatemala City, Guatemala, holds a Master's in Neurorehabilitation from Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala. With over 12 years of experience, she is renowned for integrating traditional healing methods with modern therapeutic practices. Dr. Mendoza is actively involved in community-based rehabilitation programs and has conducted numerous workshops on inclusive and culturally sensitive rehabilitation strategies. Her mission is to bridge the gap between heritage therapies and global medical standards to enhance patient recovery outcomes in underserved regions.

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