

The Effect of Hydrotherapy in Mental Health and Quality of Life of Various Diseases

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Background

Many individuals [1] with fibromyalgia, Parkinson's disease, rheumatoid arthritis, autism [2]-[4] and physical disability etc. present balance, functional mobility disabilities, pain, sleep disorders and other concomitant problems that negatively affect the mental health and the quality of life (QOL). Hydrotherapy in recent years is included as the main or adjunctive treatment in the rehabilitation program of many diseases. Many clinical studies in different population groups, of different diseases, ages and severity, compare rehabilitation between intervention in water and on land [5]-[7]. Most focus on motor function, functionality, balance, improving respiratory function and a few focus on the great part of mental health and quality of life [8]-[10].

Purpose

To systematically review the effects of hydrotherapy on mental health and QOL of patients with various diseases such as fibromyalgia, Parkinson disease, rheumatoid arthritis, autism and physical disability.

Methods

The following medical health-related databases were searched: MEDLINE, Embase, PubMed, Scopus, Physiotherapy Evidence Database (PEDro), and Google Scholar. The following search terms were used: hydrotherapy, 'aquatic therapy', 'aquatic exercise', 'aquatic physiotherapy', exercise and pool. The search was limited to randomized controlled trials, reviews and meta-analyses published in peer-reviewed journals from 2000 in the English language.

Instruments

PRISMA and PRISMA extensions were used for evaluating the suitability of trials and reviews for inclusion.

Analysis

Data relating to the components of hydrotherapy interventions were extracted in the following categories: Exercise program components, environmental components, outcome measures.

Results

Great variability was noted in the hydrotherapy environmental components, programs and service delivery [11]-[13]. Most studies have shown a positive effect of hydrotherapy mainly on the elements, stress, depression, sleep and through the improvement of motor skills and functionality in the overall improvement of the quality of life [14][15].

Conclusions and Implications



Targeted training appears to be the most important component of an effective hydrotherapy program. When considering mental health-related outcomes it seems that hydrotherapy combined or not with other therapies improves not only motor skills and functionality of patients with various diseases but also mental health and QoL. Further research is needed on the investigation of the exact mental elements that affect and the organization of specialized hydro rehabilitation programs aimed at this.

Keywords: hydrotherapy, anxiety, depression, sleep, QoL

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