Slow-Stroke Back Massage Compared With Music Therapy for Leukemia-Related Pain and Fatigue: A Randomized Controlled Trial

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Slow-Stroke Back Massage Compared With Music Therapy for Leukemia-Related Pain and Fatigue: A Randomized Controlled Trial

Miladinia, M et al. (2021)

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Background

Leukemia is a blood cancer caused by an influx of white blood cells in the bloodstream created by the bone marrow

Currently many treatments being tested and discovered for Leukemia.

Cancer-related pain (CRP) and cancer-related fatigue (CRF) are usually regulated with medication.
Leukemia patients at risk for bleeding, so nonpharmacological therapies are limited.

Slow-stroke back massage therapy offers rhythmic strokes and light pressure to relieve pain.

Music therapy offers mind-body intervention with emotional and physical effects for pain relief.

Slow-stroke back massage can be an effective way to regulate CRP and CRF. Music therapy is a promising alternative for regulating CRP and CRF.
Methods

114 adult patients with Acute Myeloid Leukemia assigned to three groups:

- Massage therapy
- Music therapy
- Standard Care therapy
Methods

Baseline measure of CRP and CRF were taken from each group using numeric rating scale (0-10).

Each group received 15 minute treatments 3x per week for 4 weeks (12 sessions), where CRP and CRF were measured weekly.

CRP and CRF were also measured for two weeks after the treatments stopped (week 5 and week 6).
Results

Massage therapy showed greater reduction in CRP.

After two weeks of no treatment, pain increased, but stayed below baseline for massage therapy, but returned to baseline for music therapy.
Results

Massage therapy showed greater reduction in CRF, but did not differ much with music therapy.

After two weeks of no treatment, fatigue increased, but stayed below baseline for massage therapy and returned to baseline for music therapy.
Conclusion

Massage therapy was more effective in the long-term for CRP and CRF.

If the study was tested for longer than four weeks, music therapy may have a stronger reduction in CRP.

Music therapy is a good alternative for patients with skin disorders or those who disapprove of massages.

Limitations are that CRP and CRF were self-reported, and those in control group were offered music/massage therapy after study.
Discussion Questions

How important is it to focus on nonpharmacological methods for cancer related pain and fatigue? Why?

Aside from cancer-related pain, where else do you see music or massage therapy treatments being applied?

What are advantages of these treatment in general? Disadvantages?
Reference