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P452 -A pilot study to examine the perceived benefits of reflexology in patients undergoing hospital base haemodialysis - SOLITUDE

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Background

According to the Renal Association Guidelines (2016) there are approximately 40,000 adults in the United Kingdom receiving Renal Replacement Therapy. It is estimated 22,311 or 41% of these patients receive haemodialysis treatment in a hospital based setting. Despite medical advances in the way haemodialysis treatment is delivered some patients still find it an arduous treatment and may experience symptoms such as pain, muscle cramp, fatigue and poor sleep quality. These symptoms have a negative effect on patient's daily and overall quality of life.

Aim

To evaluate the effect of foot reflexology on quality of life and sleep patterns in a cohort of patients undergoing hospital based haemodialysis, using an exploratory mixed methods approach.

Objectives

1. Evaluate the feasibility of patient recruitment within a single haemodialysis setting.
2. Assess the feasibility of delivering foot reflexology as a component of treatment in a haemodialysis setting.
3. Evaluate the sensitivity of the outcomes measures used in the evaluation.
4. Conduct an analysis of the data collected to identify potential treatment gains in this particular cohort.

Methods and Outcomes

A total of 20 patients receiving haemodialysis in one centre in Northern Ireland have been recruited into the pilot study.

The reflexology intervention was delivered by a trained reflexologist during the patient's regular haemodialysis treatment. Participants received a reflexology session three times a week for 30 minutes over a four week period.

Once patients were recruited to the study, outcomes measures using validated tools including the SF12-v2 quality of life questionnaire and the Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index were completed at baseline and one month post intervention so both sets of responses could be compared. Qualitative interviews were completed with 10 participants to elicit personal experiences.

Results

All the mean scores examining the various domains of quality of life improved following the reflexology intervention, with a corresponding pattern in the Physical and Mental Component Summary Scores. These findings signify a positive correlation between the reflexology intervention and quality of life. All the p-values were statistically significant, highlighting the point that reflexology improved both the mental and physical health of the respondents in the study. There was a reduction in the total mean sleep score which signifies more positive changes in sleep patterns. The mean total of hours slept per night increased by 20 minutes, an increase which was of statistical significance.

Qualitative Feedback from patients

“Reflexology has definitely helped with my sleep quality, my husband has even commented on this. Prior to reflexology I would have suffered from leg cramps, but now I have none. I feel more relaxed at home”.

“Though reflexology was a great idea. I found it very relaxing and now feel more relaxed than normal at home”.

“Felt a great benefit from reflexology. It definitely helped with my sleep, I am able to get over to sleep quicker and sleep for longer. It also helped to alleviate frequency and severity of cramps”.