

The Effects of Massage Therapy on Multiple Sclerosis

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INTRODUCTION

Multiple Sclerosis is an autoimmune disease characterized by degeneration of the myelin sheath of an axon resulting in decreased transmission of nerve impulses. Types include relapsing-remitting, acute progressive, chronic progressive attack-remitting, and benign. Symptoms vary from patient to patient and are commonly treated with medications. Common symptoms include fatigue, spasticity, swelling, and altered gait.

METHODS

A 58-year-old female diagnosed with MS 11 years earlier, presented with decreased mobility, fatigue, and left ankle edema. Assessment included:

- active and passive range of motion (ROM)
 - Myotomes
 - Dermatomes
 - Reflexes
 - Orthopedic tests
- Goals of treatments:
- increase mobility
 - decrease fatigue
 - decrease edema
- Assessment measures:
- Timed-Up-and-Go (TUG) test
 - Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS)
 - Figure-8 ankle measurement

THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION

Five massage therapy treatments were provided over a six week period.

Techniques used included:

- Swedish
- Manual Lymphatic Drainage
- Passive ROM
- Golgi Tendon Organ Technique

The results suggest that massage therapy is effective in reducing fatigue and edema in a patient with MS. The patient expressed gratitude towards the therapist and appreciated that she was able to meet her treatment goals of increased energy and relaxation.

Figure-8 Measurement of the Ankle:

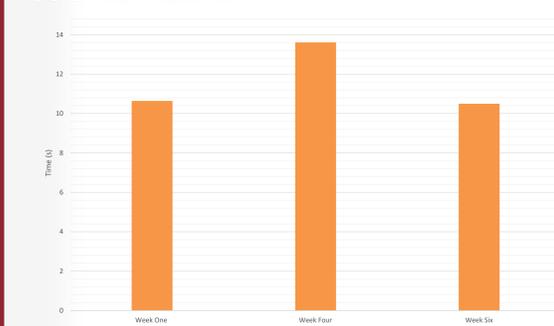


75% of those with MS report symptoms of fatigue, 65% report symptoms of edema.

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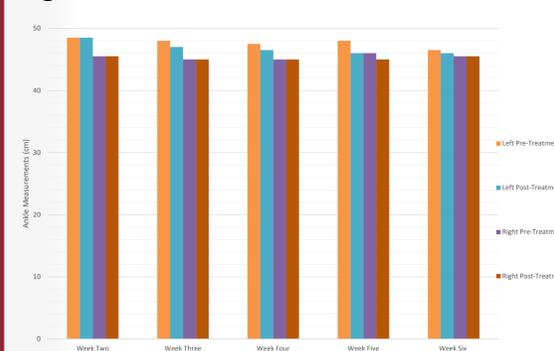
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TUG Test Results



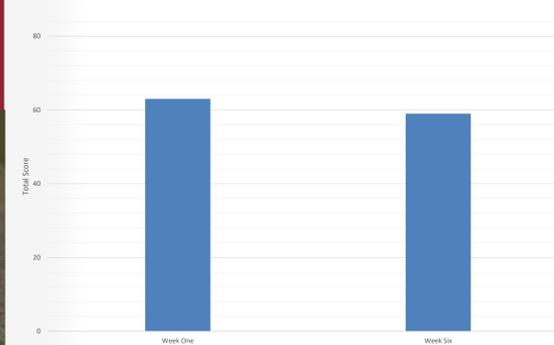
Started sitting, walked three meters without a cane and returned to sitting

Figure-8 Measurement Results



The size of both ankles was measured using a tape measure.

MFIS Results



A 21-item questionnaire which indicates levels of fatigue.

RESULTS

Little change was noted in mobility. The patient's fatigue level and left ankle edema decreased.

DISCUSSION

The results suggest that MT is effective in reducing fatigue and edema in a patient with MS. Future studies are needed to evaluate the correlation between mobility and massage.

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