Dalk and Ghamz: An Iranian Traditional Massage Technique

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Dear Editor,

With great interest, we read the article of Saha et al. [1], entitled “The effects of cupping massage in patients with chronic neck pain – a randomized controlled trial” in the journal *Complementary Medicine Research*, vol. 24, No. 1, 2017. In this study, the authors assessed the pain intensity using a visual analogue scale in a randomized controlled trial among 50 patients with chronic non-specific neck pain in two groups treated with cupping massage and used as waiting list control. According to the results of that study about neck pain intensity, a significant difference was found between the intervention group and control group. The average pain reduction in the intervention group was 36.2% compared to –4.5% in the control group [1].

We conducted an evaluation before/after study using a quasi-experimental design among 34 patients (30 women and 4 men) with chronic non-specific neck pain to assess the effectiveness of an Iranian traditional massage called “Dalk and Ghamz.” Dalk is a gentle movement of the fingertips in the longitudinal direction on a painful place, and Ghamz consists of strong pressure and movement of the fingertips in a transverse direction on the painful place [2] performed in 4 sessions (every session lasts 5–10 min). Pain intensity was measured using the visual analogue scale (0–10), 5 min after each session and 1 month (in 34 patients) after all sessions. This study was confirmed by the Iran centre of randomized controlled

trials, with the code IRCT20171111037368N2. Repeated-measure analysis showed that there was a significant reduction in pain intensity before and after the first, second, third and fourth sessions. Also, there was a significant reduction in pain intensity between baseline and 1 month after completing all sessions.

Neck pain is the second most common condition for which complementary and alternative medical therapies are used [3], and results showed that using the Dalk and Ghamz massage technique to reduce neck pain comprised positive effects. Saha et al. [1] explained that, in cupping massage, the local increase in blood circulation as a mechanism to decrease the muscle pain is controversial and needs more research. We believe that Dalk and Ghamz – like cupping – can also lead to a local increase in blood circulation in the cramped area, dissolving spasm and reducing the pain [2].

One of the advantages of the Dalk and Ghamz therapeutic approach compared with cupping is that it can be used for the whole body, even when we cannot use the cupping approach (due to the small size of a body part). Therefore, due to the efficacy of this approach obtained from this study (full results will be achieved shortly), it is recommended that Dalk and Ghamz can be combined with other complementary therapies for the treatment of muscle spasms.

Disclosure Statement

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

References

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