Evaluating the Use of Relaxation Interventions to Promote Participation and Quality of Life in Individuals with Cancer

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- High levels of anxiety and distress are associated with the diagnosis, treatment, and remission stages of cancer.
- Psychological symptoms have the potential to negatively influence functional performance, quality of life, overall health, and recovery of individuals with cancer.
- Improvements in occupational performance and quality of life, as well as reductions in anxiety and pain have been demonstrated in a variety of health conditions with the use of therapeutic relaxation techniques, such as:
  - Yoga/Tai Chi
  - Mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR)
  - Relaxation Training
  - Massage
- Research continues to emerge investigating trends in use, patient experiences, and efficacy of therapeutic relaxation techniques with individuals living with cancer.

STUDY EVALUATION AND ANALYSIS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Level of Evidence</th>
<th>Yoga</th>
<th>MBSR</th>
<th>Relaxation Training</th>
<th>Massage</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Outcome(s) Measured</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adansen, et al. (2006)</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (body awareness training)</td>
<td>Q, PA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ram, et al. (2012)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Q, S, A</td>
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<td>Smith, et al. (2005)</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Q, S, A, P</td>
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<tr>
<td>Castellar, Ferrandes, &amp; Tosta (2014)</td>
<td>III</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (Pranic Meditation)</td>
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<td>Q, S, A, P</td>
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<td>Duxio, Gutiado, &amp; Paukex (2013)</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X (deep breathing)</td>
<td>S</td>
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<td>Furer et al. (2014)</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X (touch mind-body, and energy based therapy)</td>
<td>Q, A</td>
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TYPES OF RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

- Yoga
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
- Massage
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation Training
- Meditation
- Mind-body, and energy – listening to an outside source

OUTCOMES MEASURED

- Quality of Life
- Anxiety/stress
- Physical Activity
- Sleep Quality
- Pain

LEVELS OF EVIDENCE

- Level I: Randomized control trial; Systematic review of randomized control trials (N=6 studies)
- Level II: Cohort trials (non-randomized) with two comparison groups (N=2 studies)
- Level III: Non-randomized pre- and post-test with one group (N=3 studies)
- Level IV: Qualitative study (N=1 studies)

OUTCOMES MEASURED

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FUTURE RESEARCH

- Future research is needed to investigate the potential distinction between passive* versus active** patient involvement in relaxation interventions in relation to improved quality of life.
- Longitudinal studies are needed to assess the degree and duration of impact these relaxation interventions make in the lives of individuals with cancer.
- Occupational Therapists can use the evidence to develop holistic treatment plans that incorporate relaxation techniques to enhance the individual’s functional performance.
- Occupational Therapists and the interdisciplinary care team can utilize relaxation interventions to address the psychosocial needs of patients, increase motivation, and improve patients’ sense of empowerment throughout the treatment journey.

*Denotes expanded search based on keyword
**Active indicates interventions in which the patient solely receives the intervention and does not participate in administering the intervention (i.e. massage, which is administered by a third party, and music therapy, which requires listening to an outside source)