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Introduction

- Fibromyalgia syndrome (FMS) is characterized by widespread pain, fatigue, sleep problem, that impairs patients' quality of life.
- Studies suggested that chronic inflammation of fascia and dysfunctional healing response leads to the dysfunction of the nervous system and central sensitization in FMS.¹⁻⁴
- ISBT-Bowen Therapy is a manual therapy that uses the sequences of gentle cross-fiber moves over muscles, tendons, ligaments and fascia to stimulate the flow of blood and lymph, and thus activates the body's healing mechanisms. (Fig. 1)



Fig. 1 Some moves of Bowen Therapy

Objective

- To determine the effectiveness of Bowen Therapy in pain control, functional enhancement and quality of life for FMS.

Methods

- This was a single-blinded randomized controlled trial (RCT) (NCT04554784). Eighty patients diagnosed with FMS were randomized into Bowen therapy (BT) or Control group (CT) from 15/9/2020 to 22/12/2023.
- **BT group:** 8 sessions of ISBT-Bowen Therapy in 12 weeks & with their usual meds for pain
- **CT group:** Usual conventional treatment
- Generalized estimating equation model was used to compare the

Methods

changes of outcomes over the 3 time points: before treatment (Baseline), the end of treatment (Post-Rx) and 12 weeks after treatment (Post-Rx 12W).

- **Primary outcome:** Pain intensity (Numeric Rating Scale [NRS])
- **Secondary outcomes:** Limbs endurance (Endurance Strength Test [EST]), Quality of life (SF-36), Psychological distress (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale [HADS]), Activity Interference (Brief Pain Inventory [BPI]) & Sleep disturbance (Jenkins Sleep Questionnaire [JSQ])

Results

- Seventy-eight patients (BT: 40; CT: 38) completed the study and subsequent follow-ups.
- The median (IQR) age was 58 (50-62) years. 68 patients (87%) were female. Baseline demographic data were similar between two groups, except for the total number of specialties seen (Median [IQR] BT: 4 [2-5] vs CT: 3 [2-3]; $p=0.04$).
- No significant difference in the changes of pain intensity was observed before and after BT when compared to CT ($Group*Time p=0.52$) (Fig. 2)
- When compared to CT, BT, however, may improve the endurance of lower extremities ($Group*Time p<0.01$) (Fig. 3a) and dominant arm ($Group*Time p=0.02$) (Fig. 3b), mental health-related quality of life (SF-36 MCS) ($Group*Time p<0.01$) (Fig. 3c),

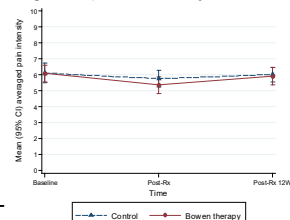


Fig. 2 Averaged pain intensity over time

Results

and reduce activity interference by pain (BPI-Interference Scale) ($Group*Time p=0.01$) (Fig. 3d) over time.

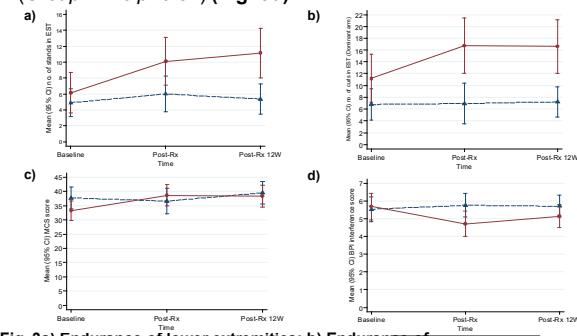


Fig. 3a) Endurance of lower extremities; b) Endurance of dominant arm; c) SF-36 MCS; d) BPI-Interference Scale

Conclusions

- Bowen Therapy may be effective in improving limbs endurance, enhancing quality of life, and reducing activity interference in patients suffering from fibromyalgia.

Reference

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