

Case study

Effects of Qi therapy (external Qigong) on symptoms of advanced cancer: a single case study

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The aim of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Qi therapy (external Qigong) in the management of symptoms of advanced cancer in a man. We used a single case study design to evaluate the effectiveness of Qi therapy (external Qigong) in a 35-year-old man with advanced cancer (Stage IV) involving metastases in the stomach, lung and bone (Karnofsky performance scale: KPS, 40: requires special care and assistance, disabled). Treatment involved six days of pre-assessment, eight treatment sessions on alternate days over 16 days, and a two-week follow-up phase. A visual analogue scale (VAS) was used to assess the patient's self-reported symptoms of cancer over the intervention and follow-up periods. Following treatment, VAS scores' analysis revealed beneficial effects on pain, vomiting, dyspnoea, fatigue, anorexia, insomnia, daily activity and psychological calmness. These improvements were maintained over the two-week follow-up phase. After the first Qi therapy session, the patient discontinued medication and could sit by himself; after the fourth session, the patient was able to walk and use the toilet without assistance (improvement in KPS: 70: care for self, unable to perform normal activity or to do active work). Although limited by the single case study approach, our results support previous studies on this topic and provide reasons to conduct controlled clinical trials.

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