

CHRONIC LOW BACK PAIN AND SPA THERAPY

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Introduction: Low back pain (LBP) represents the most common reasons of medical care request, also because LBP evolves to Chronic Low Back Pain (CLBP) very often. Several factors are involved in CLBP pathogenesis such as lumbar spine osteoarthritis, overweight/obesity etc.. The mud-bath treatment with sulphurous mineral water is commonly prescribed to contrast CLBP. Nowadays, data on the efficacy of such an approach in these patients are very scarce. The aim of this observational pilot study was to investigate impact of sulphurous mud-bath therapy on pain perception and disability-function that all together affect the quality of life (QoL) of patients suffering from CLBP associated with lumbar spine osteoarthritis.

Patients and Methods: The study was conducted on 43 patients (42% male and 58% female) consecutively admitted to the Telespa (Telespa Terme – Benevento, Italy) with diagnosis of lumbar spine osteoarthritis associated with CLBP and treated with one cycle of 12 applications of sulphurous mud-bath. At the beginning and at the end of the SPA treatment were evaluated: painful symptomatology (using Visual Analogic Scale 0-100mm: VAS), disability-function of lumbar spine (using Fingertip-To-Floor test: FTF-test). In addition, we analyzed whether the effects of spa could change between subjects with different Body Mass Index (BMI) within or above the normal range. The occurrence of possible adverse events (AE) and/or adverse drug reactions (ADR) was also considered during the spa treatment.

Results: The spa therapy induced a significant ($p < 0.01$) reduction of painful symptomatology (44 ± 26.1 to 22 ± 21.6) with improvement of lumbar spine function, as evidenced by FTF-test (15.3 ± 11 to 13.4 ± 9 , $p = 0.03$). On the basis of the BMI the study population was subdivided in two groups: with normal BMI (A) and with BMI above of the normal range (B). At the end of the spa treatment a significant ($p < 0.05$) reduction in both painful symptomatology in both groups was demonstrated. All enrolled patients completed the study and no adverse events and/or adverse drug reactions were found.

Conclusions: Our data suggest that mud-bath therapy with sulphurous mineral water might be useful in the global treatment of the patients with lumbar spine osteoarthritis associated with CLBP also with BMI within or above normal range.