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Mirror therapy in neuropathic pain and disability treatment in patients with complex regional pain syndrome developed after the distal radius fractures

Viktor Kotiuk¹, Alexander Buryanov², Alexander Kostrub³, Ivan Zasadnyuk¹ and Roman Blonskiy¹¹SI Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics of the Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine, Ukraine²Bogomolets National Medical University, Ukraine

Title: The influence of mirror therapy on neuropathic pain and disability in patients with complex regional pain syndrome developed after fractures of the distal radius.

Objectives: Mirror therapy is a simple to perform, cheap and effective for various pathological conditions method. The effect of mirror therapy on different aspects of pain and disability in complex regional pain syndrome type I (CRPS I) patients, is not well determined. The aim of the study was to investigate the influence of mirror therapy on pain and disability in patients with CRPS I developed after fractures of the distal radius.

Methods: We analyzed the results of treatment of 30 patients with CRPS I, developed after the distal radius fractures, with help of mirror therapy together with exercise therapy and medications. There were 20 patients with CRPS I developed as a result of the distal radius fractures treated only with exercise therapy and medications in the control group. The results were evaluated before the treatment, after three days and after 6 weeks of treatment according to VAS, McGill Pain Questionnaire, Pain Detect scale, ABILHAND.

Results: 86.67% patients experienced the positive effect of mirror therapy on the pain at least according to one of the scales after 6 weeks of treatment, and 70% - from standard treatment without mirror therapy. The positive effect was statistically significant accordingly to McGill Pain Questionnaire after 6 weeks of treatment compared to the control group and even accordingly to VAS. In some patients we observed improvements even after 3 days of treatment. Though they were less pronounced, the improvement in VAS was the least impressive among the others pain scales.

Conclusions: Mirror therapy can help to decrease the pain (mostly on neuropathic pain scales) and disability as an element of integrated treatment of CRPS I developed after fractures of the distal radius.

kotyuk_v@ukr.net