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Comparison of two traditional spa therapy regiments in patents with knee osteoarthritis. An exploratory study.

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Purpose: to compare the effect of two different traditional spa therapy regiments for knee osteoarthritis (OA) on function and pain. **Patients and method.** Patients with knee osteoarthritis staying in a spa hotel in Sandikli Spa for traditional spa therapy (8days) were asked to be included in the study. Total of 49 patients gave informed consent consisting two groups based on treatment regiment as follows: Group I (n = 24) had a thermal water bath and a peloid bath per day; group II (n = 25) had two thermal mineral water bath per day. The primary outcome measure was Lequesne's Knee Severity Index. Secondary measures were pain intensity (visual analog scale), 10 meters walking time, 3 time squatting down and up time and 10 stairs stepping up and down time. An unblinded observer carried out all assessment at the beginning and at the end of spa therapy. **Results:** In both groups improvement were found in Lequesne's knee Index (49,3 % in group I and 31.3% in group II, respectively) ($p < 0,001$) an improvement in group I was significantly higher than group II ($p < 0,001$). VAS score for pain reduced in both groups (37.3% and 30.1%) and this reduction was significantly higher in group I ($p = 0.003$). All other three measure also showed significant improvement in both groups and again improvement were significantly higher in group I than in group II. **Conclusion:** Both traditional spa therapy regiments could significantly improve the functional status and pain on patients with knee OA. In the present study, spa therapy combining thermal bath and peloid application seems having better improvement than the therapy with twice daily thermal bath in knee OA but this difference may not be clinically relevant.