

[Related Articles, Books, LinkOut](#)

Spa treatment for primary fibromyalgia syndrome: a combination of thalassotherapy, exercise and patient education improves symptoms and quality of life

Zijlstra TR, van der Laar M, BerneLOT Moens H, taal E, Zakraoui L, Rasker J

Rheumatology 2005, 44 (4):539-46

Department of Rheumatology, Medisch Spectrum Twente Hospital, Enschede, The Netherlands.

t.r.zijlstra@worldonline.nl

OBJECTIVES: To study the effect of a combination of thalassotherapy, exercise and patient education in people with fibromyalgia.

METHODS: Patients with fibromyalgia, selected from a rheumatology out-patient department and from members of the Dutch fibromyalgia patient association, were pre-randomized to receive either 2(1/2) weeks of treatment in a Tunisian spa resort, including thalassotherapy, supervised exercise and group education (active treatment) or treatment as usual (control treatment). Primary outcome measure was health-related quality of life, measured with the RAND-36 questionnaire. Secondary measures included the Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire, the McGill Pain Questionnaire, the Beck Depression Inventory, tender point score and a 6-min treadmill walk test.

RESULTS: Fifty-eight participants receiving the active treatment reported significant improvement on RAND-36 physical and mental component summary scales. For physical health, differences from the 76 controls were statistically significant after 3 months, but not after 6 and 12 months. A similar pattern of temporary improvement was seen in the self-reported secondary measures. Tender point scores and treadmill walk tests improved more after active treatment, but did not reach significant between-group differences, except for walk tests after 12 months.

CONCLUSIONS: A combination of thalassotherapy, exercise and patient education may temporarily improve fibromyalgia symptoms and health-related quality of life.

Publication Types:

- Clinical Trial
- Randomized Controlled Trial