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Effectiveness of yoga and Pilates compared to pelvic floor muscle training for urinary incontinence in elderly women: A randomised controlled pilot trial

Research Objectives

To investigate the preliminary effects and feasibility of using Pilates and yoga to manage urinary incontinence (UI).

Design

An assessor-blinded, three-arm randomised controlled pilot trial.

Setting

Potential participants were recruited from three elderly care centres in Hong Kong.

Participants

Thirty women were included in the trial. Women were included if they (1) were aged 60 or above, (2) had stress or mixed UI and (3) obtained at least 6 out of 21 in the International Consultation on Incontinence Questionnaire-Short Form (ICIQ-SF). Women were excluded if they (1) had pure urgency incontinence, (2) were experiencing UI caused by neurological conditions, (3) had cognitive impairment (obtaining a score of less than 23 in the Mini-Mental State Examination scale), (4) had pelvic organ prolapse (5) were currently receiving treatment for pelvic cancer, or (6) were bedridden.

Interventions

Study centers were randomly assigned to each of the three interventions including yoga, Pilates and standard care (pelvic floor muscle training). Study interventions were provided once a week for 4 weeks, followed by unsupervised CD-guided home exercises for 8 weeks.

Main Outcome Measures

ICIQ-SF, one-hour pad test and feasibility measures.

Results

After the 4-week training, all three interventions significantly improved urinary incontinence measured with the ICIQ-sf ($p=0.01$). These benefits were maintained at 12 weeks in Yoga and standard care groups ($p = 0.01$). Between groups analysis of ICIQ-sf scores revealed a significant effect of Yoga compared to Pilates ($p=0.02$). Yoga and standard care provided statistically significant benefits at 4 weeks for grams of urine lost measured with the one-hour pad test ($p=0.01$). There was no significant effect of all three interventions on the one-hour pad test at 12 weeks ($p>0.05$). Between groups analysis identified no statistically significant effect of Yoga and Pilates compared to standard care or Yoga compared to Pilates for the one-hour pad test ($p>0.05$).

Conclusions

The preliminary results of this study show that Yoga and Pilates may be effective in reducing involuntary leakage of urine in elderly women with stress urinary incontinence.

Author(s) Disclosures

None declared.