

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION (JACOBSON) IN THE MANAGEMENT OF FATIGUE IN PATIENT WITH MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS. PLANNING A LIFELONG EDUCATIONAL INTERVENTION .



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Background

Fatigue is one of the most common symptoms in multiple sclerosis (MS). Up to 90% of the patients complain of this symptom and for half of them it is the most disabling. Despite the great number of studies dealing with this symptom, it seems to be hardly susceptible of treatment.

Objective

PMR is a simple relaxation technique that can be applied in various situations. Several studies have shown that this technique can be applied to patients with MS by reducing the effects of fatigue. Our study focuses on the crucial role of the nurse in health promotion using a complementary, non-invasive and low-cost technique to control some of the most disabling symptoms of the disease. The main objective of this study was to verify, through testing of a therapeutic project aimed at acquiring this technique on a sample of patients participating voluntarily after a sampling of eligibility, the effectiveness of education in terms of satisfaction and learning.

Materials and methods

The study focused on the PMR training of a group of 8 people with MS who responded to a sampling of eligibility (age, age at onset, residence, EDSS, FSS). To assess the score of fatigue we employed the Fatigue Severity Scale, administering the questionnaire before and after the training. The response in terms of appreciation and learning, was thoroughly assessed. The training took place in hospital setting twice a week for two weeks, each session lasting about 45 minutes. The technique was taught by the nurse who made sure of the acquisition of the correct movements and posture by the patients. The patients carried on their training at home for 8 weeks and both their score and their appreciation of the training were evaluated at the end of the programme.

Results

The total score of fatigue seems to be considerably reduced after the training (FSS before the beginning of the training was 5.5 points, 4 points afterwards). The results show that the technique can be learned easily and it is suitable to everyday life.



Conclusions

Jacobson's PMR technique not only improves the quality of life of MS patient, but it can be easily taught by nurses, greatly improving the quality of life. The study shows that nurses play an important role in the educational process. The method is a complementary non-invasive and low-cost treatment, ideal for treating some of the disease symptoms, such as fatigue, which cause great discomfort in MS patients. The meetings held were useful not only for training in itself, but also from the point of view of socialization and exchange of different experiences dates with the same disease. Although the small sample of patients taken into account in our study is an evident drawback, the positive results will certainly encourage further studies with a wider sampling in order to ascertain the effectiveness of the technique.

