The Effects of Massage Therapy on Multiple Sclerosis

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INTRODUCTION
Multiple Sclerosis is an autoimmune disease characterized by degeneration of the myelin sheath of an axon resulting in decreased transmission of nerve impulses. Types include relapsing-remitting, acute progressive, chronic progressive attack-remitting, and benign. Symptoms vary from patient to patient and are commonly treated with medications. Common symptoms include fatigue, spasticity, swelling, and altered gait.

METHODS
A 58-year-old female diagnosed with MS 11 years earlier, presented with decreased mobility, fatigue, and left ankle edema. Assessment included:
- active and passive range of motion (ROM)
- Myotomes
- Dermatomes
- Reflexes
- Orthopedic tests
- Goals of treatments:
  - increase mobility
  - decrease fatigue
  - decrease edema
- Assessment measures:
  - Timed-Up-and-Go (TUG) test
  - Modified Fatigue Impact Scale (MFIS)
- Figure-8 ankle measurement

THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTION
Five massage therapy treatments were provided over a six week period. Techniques used included:
- Swedish
- Manual Lymphatic Drainage
- Passive ROM
- GoTji Tendon Organ Technique

RESULTS
The results suggest that massage therapy is effective in reducing fatigue and edema in a patient with MS. The patient expressed gratitude towards the therapist and appreciated that she was able to meet her treatment goals of increased energy and relaxation.

Figure-8 Measurement Results:
- The size of both ankles was measured using a tape measure.
- A 21-item questionnaire which indicates levels of fatigue.

REFERENCES
20. Little change was noted in mobility. The patient’s fatigue level and left ankle edema decreased.

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