Background
Dystonia is a neurological disorder, characterized by involuntary muscle spasms and terrors, resulting in abnormal movements and posture. Symptoms include pain, spasms, tremors, and dyskinesia. Conventional treatments include medication, botulinum injections, and surgical intervention. Many dystonia patients seek complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) therapies such as massage, but the effects of treatments are not well documented. Little research was found on massage and dystonia. This study documents massage treatment for dystonia, in a specific case.

Objective
To examine the effects of massage therapy on pain, dyskinesia, and functional mobility in activities of daily living in a patient with dystonia.

Patient Profile
A 51-year-old female presented with symptoms of pain, spasms, and tremors, affecting her functional mobility in activities of daily living. She first experienced symptoms following a rock-climbing accident in 1998, and was diagnosed with dystonia in 2003.

Methods
To examine the effects of massage therapy on pain, dyskinesia, and functional mobility in activities of daily living in a patient

Treatment
A student massage therapist administered five massages over a six-week period.

Techniques used:
- Swedish massage
- Hydrotherapy
- Myofascial release
- Stretching
- Remedial exercise

Assessment
Pre- and post-Numeric Rating Scale for pain
Frequency of night pain
Modified Bradykinesia Rating Scale
Timed Up and Go Test
Functional Rating Index
Modified Gait Efficacy Scale

Positive Outcomes
Pre- and Post-Numeric Rating Scale for Pain

Frequency of night pain

A decrease in frequency of pain experienced at night was shown.

Results

Timed Up and Go Test
Decreased test time shows an improvement in test score.

Functional Rating Index
Decreased score shows an improvement in subjective functional ability.

Negative Outcomes
Modified Gait Efficacy Scale
Decreased score shows a worsening of subjective gait ability.

References