

Does transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation reduce pain and improve quality of life in patients with idiopathic chronic orchialgia? A randomized controlled trial.

Tantawy SA , Kamel DM ,Abdelbasset WK (2018)

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Abstract

Background:

Chronic orchialgia is defined as testicular pain, which may be either unilateral or bilateral, lasting for more than 3 months. It disturbs a patient's daily activities and quality of life (QoL), inciting the patient to search for treatments to alleviate the pain. It is estimated that 25% of chronic orchialgia cases are idiopathic.

Purpose:

The purpose of this study was to investigate how effective transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) is in pain reduction and how it consequently affects the QoL in patients with idiopathic chronic orchialgia (ICO).

Patients and methods:

Seventy-one patients were randomly assigned to group A (study group), which included 36 patients who received TENS and analgesia, and group B (control group), which included 35 patients who received analgesia only. The outcome measures were the participants' demographic data and results of the visual analog scale (VAS) and QoL questionnaire. These outcomes were measured before and after 4 weeks of treatment and at 2-month follow-up.

Results:

The results showed that compared to pretreatment, there was a significant reduction in pain postintervention and at 2-month follow-up in group A ($P < 0.0001$ and < 0.001 , respectively; $F = 7.1$) as well as a significant improvement in QoL at these time points ($P < 0.0001$ and < 0.0001 , respectively). There were no significant differences in the VAS score and QoL in group B at different time points of evaluation.

Conclusion:

The findings indicate that TENS is effective in reducing pain and improving patients' QoL in cases of ICO. TENS is an easy-to-use, effective, noninvasive, and simple method for ICO-associated pain control and QoL improvement.

KEYWORDS:

TENS; VAS; chronic pain; orchialgia; pain assessment; physiotherapy; quality of life; testicular pain