Effect of non-pharmacological interventions in patients with Scleroderma: a systematic review and meta-analysis

Background:
Scleroderma is a group of autoimmune diseases that may result in changes to the skin, blood vessels, muscles, and internal organs. The disease can be either localized to the skin or involve other organs, as well. Symptoms may include areas of thickened skin, stiffness, feeling tired, and poor blood flow to the fingers or toes with cold exposure. The cause is unknown, but it may be due to an abnormal immune response.

While no cure is known, treatment may improve symptoms. Medications used include corticosteroids, methotrexate, and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

However, it is yet to be shown what non-pharmacological interventions are used in the field of rehabilitation and what their efficiency is.

Aim:
The aim of this systematic review will be to dissect the existing literature and identify studies using non-pharmacological interventions in the treatment of patients with Scleroderma.

Tasks:
The successful candidate will specify the research question with help of the supervisor and compile a review protocol. Using academic research libraries and appropriate assessment tools, the results of the protocol’s search will be extracted and synthesised in line with accepted guidelines (e.g. PRISMA, Cochrane).

Requirements:
- Interests in non-pharmacological interventions in rehabilitation
- Proficiency in use of MS Office and a literature management software, e.g. EndNote, citavi, zotero
- Basic knowledge of statistical analysis with appropriate software, e.g. RevMan
- Highly motivated and team-oriented working morale

Offer:
- Introduction and supervision throughout the entire project
- Exciting opportunities in an interdisciplinary environment of clinical research and rehabilitation
- Possibility to visit various departments involved in rehabilitation of neurologic, orthopaedic, or geriatric patients.

Time period:
Begin and duration is negotiable.

For further questions, please contact Dr. C. Schuster-Amft, Head, Research Department, Reha Rheinfelden (c.schuster@reha-rhf.ch) or PD Dr. U. Gerth, Leading physician, Reha Rheinfelden (u.gerth@reha-rhf.ch)

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