

Effects of Additional Pelvic Floor Exercise on Sexual Function, Quality of Life and Pain Intensity in Subjects with Chronic Low Back Pain

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Abstract : The negative impact of chronic pain syndromes on sexual function has been reported in several studies; however, the influences of treatment strategies on sexual dysfunction have not been evaluated widely. The aim of this study was to determine the effects of pelvic floor exercise on sexual dysfunction in female patients with chronic low back pain. Forty-two patient with chronic low back pain were enrolled this study. Subjects were divided into two groups. Group 1 received conventional physiotherapy consist of heat therapy, ergonomic education, William flexion exercise during 6 weeks. Group 2 received pelvic floor exercises in addition to conventional physiotherapy. Female Sexual Function Index (FSFI) was used for the assessment of sexual function. Pain intensity was assessed with Visual Analogue Scale. Quality of life was assessed with World Health Organization Quality of Life Scale. All measurements were taken before and after treatment. In conventional physiotherapy group; there were significant improvement in pain intensity ($p= 0,003$), physical health ($p=0,011$), psychological health ($p=0,042$) subscales of quality of life scale, arousal ($p=0,042$), lubrication ($p=0,028$) and pain ($p= 0,034$) subscales of FSFI. In additional pelvic floor exercise group; there were significant improvement in pain intensity ($p= 0,005$), physical health ($p=0,012$) psychological health ($p=0,039$) subscales of quality of life scale, arousal ($p=0,024$), lubrication ($p=0,011$), orgasm ($p=0,035$) and pain ($p= 0,015$) subscales and total score ($p=0,016$) of FSFI. Total FSFI score ($p=0,025$) and orgasm ($p=0,017$) subscale of FSFI were significantly higher for the additional pelvic floor exercise group than the conventional physiotherapy group. The outcome of this study suggested that conventional physiotherapy may contribute to improve pain, quality of life and some parameters of the sexual function in patients with low back pain. Although additional pelvic floor exercise did not reveal more treatment effect in terms of quality of life and pain intensity, it caused significant improvement in sexual function. It is recommended that pelvic floor exercise should be added to treatment programs in order to manage sexual dysfunction more effectively in patients with chronic low back pain.

Keywords : physiotherapy, chronic pain, sexual dysfunction, pelvic floor

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