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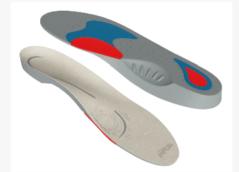
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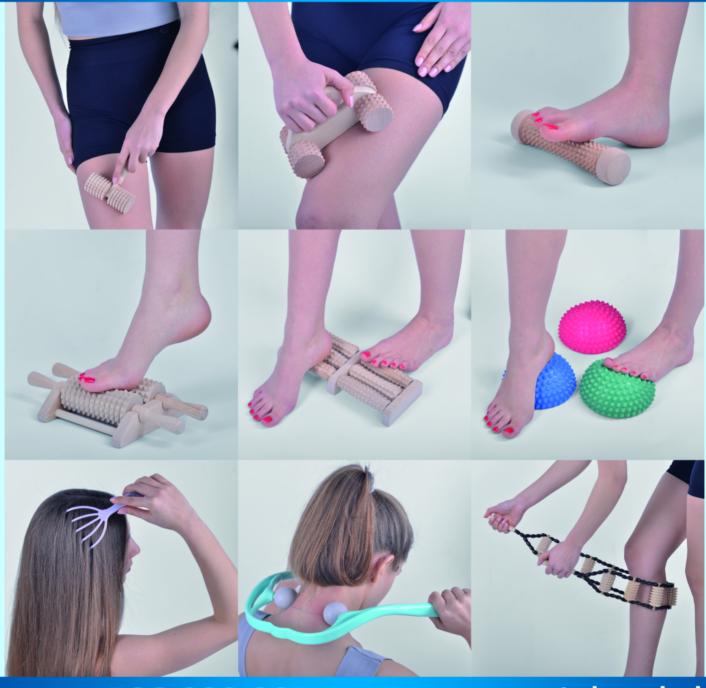
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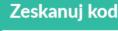


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Effect of pilates exercises on postmenopausal symptoms and lumbar flexibility

Wpływ ćwiczeń typu pilates na objawy pomenopauzalne i elastyczność odcinka lędźwiowego

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Abstract

Background and objective. Postmenopausal women suffer from clinical symptoms such as vasomotor, psychological, physical, and genitourinary symptoms. 77% of postmenopausal women suffer from muscle and joint problems, loss of muscle strength and flexibility. This study was conducted to see effect of Pilates exercise on postmenopausal symptoms and lumbar flexibility. Methods. Forty postmenopausal women at least 1 year from their last menstruation aged from 50-59 years there BMI does not exceed 30 kg/m2 were assigned randomly to 2 equal groups: Group A (study group) received calcium 500 mg/day, cholecalciferol (vitamin D3) (0.2mg)/day and Pilates exercises (hundred, saw, side kick spine stretch) for 45 minutes/ session, three times per week for 12 weeks. Group B (control group) only received calcium 500 mg/day and cholecalciferol (0.2 mg)/day for 12 weeks. Their menopausal symptoms were assessed through menopausal rating scale (MRS) and lumbar flexibility assessed by (modified Schober test, sit to reach test and fingertip to floor test) before and after treatment period.

Results. There was a significant decrease in MRS post treatment results in the study and control group compared with that of pretreatment ones (p > 0.01). there was a significant decrease in the post treatment results of MRS of Group A (study group) compared with that of Group B (control group). Regarding flexibility There was a significant increase in sit and reach distance, modified Schober test distance and significant decrease in fingertip-to-floor distance post treatment results in the study and control group compared with that pretreatment results (p < 0.001), there was a significant increase in lumbar flexibility of Group A (study group) compared with that of Group B (control group) post-treatment results.

Conclusion. Pilate's exercise has a positive effect on postmenopausal symptoms and lumbar flexibility.

Key words:

Pilate's exercise, menopause, postmenopausal symptoms, lumbar flexibility

Streszczenie

Wprowadzenie i cel. U kobiet po menopauzie występują pewne objawy kliniczne, takie jak objawy naczynioruchowe, psychologiczne, fizyczne i moczowo-płciowe. 77% kobiet po menopauzie cierpi na problemy z mięśniami i stawami, utratę siły i elastyczności mięśni. Badanie zostało przeprowadzone, aby zobaczyć wpływ ćwiczeń typu pilates na objawy pomenopauzalne i elastyczność lędźwiową. Metody. Czterdzieści kobiet po menopauzie co najmniej 1 rok od ostatniej miesiączki, w wieku 50-59 lat, o BMI nie przekraczającym 30 kg/m2 zostało losowo przydzielonych do 2 równych grup: Grupa A (grupa badana) otrzymywała wapń 500 mg/dobę, cholekalcyferol (witamina D3) (0,2 mg)/dzień i wykonywała ćwiczenia typu pilates (setka, piła, rozciąganie kręgosłupa) przez 45 minut/sesję, trzy razy w tygodniu przez 12 tygodni. Grupa B (grupa kontrolna) otrzymywała tylko wapń 500 mg/dzień i cholekalcyferol (0,2 mg)/dzień przez 12 tygodni. Objawy menopauzy oceniano za pomocą skali oceny menopauzy (MRS) i elastyczności lędźwiowej ocenianej za pomocą zmodyfikowanego testu Schobera, testu "siąść i dosięgać" i testu palce podłoga przed i po leczeniu.

Wyniki. W grupie badanej i kontrolnej wystąpił istotny spadek wyników MRS po leczeniu w porównaniu z wynikami przed leczeniem (p > 0,01). Nastąpił znaczny spadek wyników MRS po leczeniu w grupie A (grupa badana) w porównaniu z wynikami grupy B (grupa kontrolna). Jeśli chodzi o elastyczność w grupie badanej i kontrolnej w porównaniu z wynikami przed leczeniem (p < 0,001) zaobserwowano znaczny wzrost odległości w teście "siąść i dosięgać", w teście Schobera oraz znaczne zmniejszenie odległości palców od podłogi po leczeniu (p < 0,001). Zaobserwowano znaczny wzrost elastyczności lędźwiowej w grupie A (grupa badana) w porównaniu z grupą B (grupa kontrolna) po leczeniu.

Wniosek. Ćwiczenia typu pilates mają pozytywny wpływ na objawy pomenopauzalne i elastyczność lędźwiową.

Słowa kluczowe

Ćwiczenia typu pilates, menopauza, objawy pomenopauzalne, elastyczność lędźwiowa



Introduction

Menopause is permanent stoppage of menses because of cessation of ovarian function and estrogen decline which starts from the perimenopausal period [1] this led to physical, psychological, vasomotor, and urogenital symptoms [2, 3]. Menopause usually occurs between the ages of 49 and 52 [4]. Or after uterus removal, symptoms may occur earlier at average 45 years old [5].

After the menopausal transition, the incidence of osteoporosis and sarcopenia rapidly increases [6]. Resulting in more musculoskeletal decline in flexibility and muscle strength [7, 8].

Given that 65.6% of postmenopausal women have hot flashes, 77% suffer from muscle and joint problems, 69.6% from sexual problems and 74.6% from depression, Pilate's exercise can improve the balance, flexibility, muscle strength and quality of life in the post-menopausal period. [9]. Pilates exercise training is considered suitable type of exercise for the elderly because it has an impact on functional ability and quality of life [10].

It has been proven that this exercise can increase muscle flexibility and strength, [11, 12] improve dynamic postural balance and as a general decrease the harmful effects of menopause on different body functions and improves quality of life. It is also safer than other types of exercises because there is no physical contact and less incidence of risk of musculoskeletal injuries [13, 14, 15].

Studies about exercises that are most suitable for postmenopausal period and its problems and its effect on the elderly female's quality of life are still insufficient. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to comparatively analyze the effects of Pilates exercise program on lumbar flexibility and different post-menopausal discomfort symptoms on the different body systems which by its turn emphasis on the elderly female's quality of life.

Materials and methods

Study Design

The study was designed Two groups pre-test post-test design. It was conducted at Zenen Family Planning Unit in Bolaq El Dakror. Giza. It was conducted between October 2020 to January 2021.

Participants

This study was carried out on forty postmenopausal women were selected randomly from Zenen Family Planning Unit in Bolaq El Dakror Giza Egypt after the approval of the ethical committee of Faculty of Physical Therapy Cairo University. This study followed the Guidelines of the Declaration of Helsinki on the conduct of Human Research. Flow of participants through the stages of the study is shown in figure 1.

Randomization

Each participant was informed about the nature, purpose, and benefits of the study, the right to refuse or withdraw at any time, and the confidentiality of any obtained data. The postmenopausal women were randomly assigned into 2 equal groups (A and B) with the use of a computer-based randomization program. No dropping out of subjects from the study was reported after randomization. The patients were blinded to their allocation. All participants signed an informed consent form before being assigned randomly into two equal groups (A and B).

Inclusion and exclusion criteria Inclusion criteria

40 postmenopausal women their ages from 50 to 59 years old, their body mass index (BMI) did not exceed 30 kg/m2,their last period from 1 year ago and complain from postmenopausal symptoms such as hot flashes, sleep disturbance, depressed mood, sexual problems, anxiety, urogenital problems as diagnosed by menopausal rating scale and a limitation in lumbar range of motion that evaluated by modified Schober test, finger-tip to floor test and sit to reach test.

Exclusion criteria

Women with BMI exceed above 30kg/m2, Smoking and if had medical history of metabolic, musculoskeletal, or cardiovascular disease or disorder, or participate in any other physical treatment during the period of the study or having any hormonal therapy.

Procedures

Assessment procedures

All participants in both groups evaluated before and after treatment program which was 12 weeks.

Menopause Rating Scale

That evaluate postmenopausal symptoms (somatic, psychological, and urogenital symptoms), This scale; is completed by women themselves, with a total of 11 items. The 5-point scoring scale allows women to describe the perceived severity of each item by checking the corresponding box (severity 0 [no complaint] and 4 scoring points [very severe symptoms]). The comprehensive score of each dimension (subscale) is based on the sum of the scores of each dimension. The comprehensive score (total score) is the sum of the dimension scores [16, 17]

Flexibility test for lumbar region

Sit and reach test

commonly used to assess lower body flexibility. ACSM Guidelines for Exercise Testing and Prescription includes it as a test for hamstring and lower-back flexibility [18]. The woman begins this test sit on the floor with both feet straight out against a box, her knee was extended, and she tried to reach as far as she can over the box and record the length that women reached.

Modified Schober Test

measures the increase in distance between 2 defined points on the lower back to exclude the effect of hamstring, hip and pelvis joints. In research and clinical settings, these improved Schober tests appear to be the widely accepted and commonly used method for evaluating the ROM of lumbar flexion [19].

Women stand and therapist marked both posterior superior iliac spine (PSIS) and makes a horizontal line at the center of both marks, a second line is made 5 cm bellow the first line, and third line is marked 10 cm above the first line. Woman is instructed to flex forward as if trying to touch her toes, then the therapist remeasured distance between the top and bottom lines.



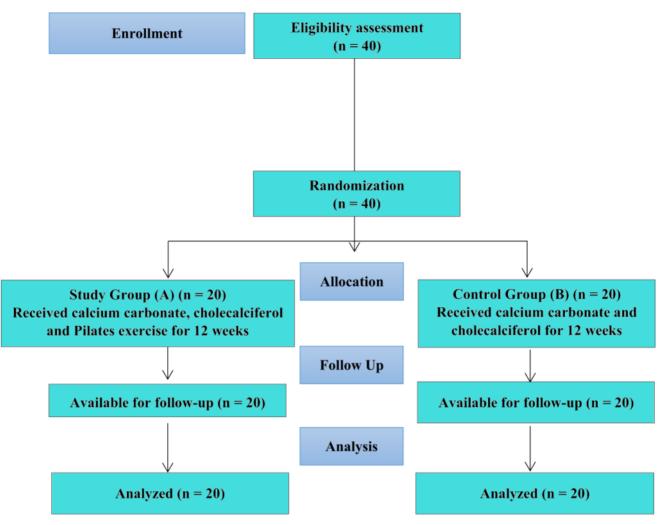


Figure 1. Flow chart of the study

Fingertip-to-floor test

seems to be well accepted and commonly used assessment methods for lumbar flexion ROM in both research and clinical settings [20].

The woman easily stands with both feet forward the bend forward without flexing her knees trying to touch the floor with fingertips, as far as she can. The distance between her right long finger and the floor is measured in centimeters. The test is performed 3 times where the best effort is measured and considered as the outcome.

Interventions

Group A (Study group)

consisted of 20 postmenopausal women who received calcium carbonate 500mg/day, cholecalciferol (vit. D3) 0.2 mg/day and Pilates exercises for 45 minutes/ session, three times per week for 12 weeks.

Group B (Control group)

consisted of 20 postmenopausal women who received calcium carbonate 500 mg/day and cholecalciferol (vit. D3) 0.2 mg/day for 12 weeks.

Treatment Procedures

Group A (Study group)

It consisted of 20 postmenopausal women who received calcium carbonate, cholecalciferol, and Pilate's exercise program.

Pilates exercise program

The program was adopted from Pilates Academy International was modified in accordance with the participants capabilities. We started by 7–10 min for the warm-up, 35–40 min for the main program, and 5–7 min for cooling-down. The main program consisted of (the Hundred, Saw, Side kick and spine stretch). Exercises were repeated 10–15 times for 2–5 sets, with a 10-sec rest per repetition and 60 sec between sets. The rating of perceived exertion (RPE) was used to gradually increase the program intensity [21].

The Hundred

Woman was crock lying position, she took a deep breath, flatten her lower back onto the mat, raise her head and shoulders off the mat, and raise her arms few inches off the mat. On this position she raised her arms up and down keeping her shoulders stable and count to 5 then relax and took a deep breath in-



crease the repetition gradually all through period of the study till reaching 100 counts.

Side kick

Woman lied on her left side keeping her shoulders, hips, and ankles vertically on top of one another. Moved her legs slightly forward at a slight angle so she can see her toes. Support her head on her left arm. As she inhaled try to kick with her left leg twice then relax and take deep breath. She can pulse it at a 75-degree angle or more, depending on her flexibility. Repeat at least 10 times on her right leg and then switch to the other side.

Saw

Woman was at long sitting position, slightly wider than hip distance. As she took a deep breath and stretch her arms out to each side, creating a "T" with them at shoulder height. When she exhaled, she asked to reach her right foot with left hand then return to starting position then repeat to other side complete at least 10 times on each side.

Spine stretch

Woman in long sitting, this time at hip-distance apart. As she inhaled her arms should be stretched out in front of her, palms down, at shoulder-width distance. Exhaled as she lengthens her spine upward then roll forward, articulating her spine one

Table 2. Demographic data of participants in both groups

vertebra at a time as she reaches toward her feet; she wants to keep her arms parallel to the floor, palms down as she stretches. Remember to pull her abdominals in as she stretched, she inhaled as she restacks her spine, rolling back up to her starting position. Repeat these steps 10 times.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive statistics and unpaired t-test were conducted for comparison of subject characteristics between groups. Normal distribution of data was checked using the Shapiro-Wilk test for all variables. Levene's test for homogeneity of variances was conducted to test the homogeneity between groups. Unpaired t-test was conducted to compare the mean values of MRS, sit and reach test, modified Schober test and fingertip-to-floor test between the study(A) and control(B) groups. Paired t-test was conducted for comparison between pre and post treatment in each group. The level of significance for all statistical tests was set at p < 0.05. All statistical analysis was conducted through the statistical package for social studies (SPSS) version 25 for windows (IBM SPSS, Chicago, IL, USA).

Participant's characteristics

Table (1) showed the participants characteristics of the study and control groups. There was no significant difference between groups in age, weight, height BMI and period from last menstrual cycle (p > 0.05).

Effect of treatment on MRS and lumbar flexibility

	Study group (A) Mean ± SD	Control group (B) Mean ± SD	MD	t- value	p-value
Age [years]	55.05 ± 2.94	54.75 ± 2.69	0.3	0.33	0.73
Weight [kg]	73.3 ± 4.15	74.1 ± 4.03	-0.8	-0.61	0.54
Height [cm]	160.85 ± 3.85	162.8 ± 3.79	-1.95	-1.61	0.11
BMI [kg/m ²]	28.31 ± 0.87	27.96 ± 1.38	0.95	-0.11	0.34
Period from last menstrual cycle [years]	4.47 ± 1.84	4.27 ± 1.67	0.35	1.07	0.72

SD: standard deviation; p-value: level of significance

Within group comparison

There was a significant decrease in MRS post treatment results in both the study(A) and control(B) group compared with that of pretreatment ones (p > 0.01). The percent of decrease in MRS in the study group was 46.18% and that for control group was 24.61%.

There was a significant increase in sit and reach distance, modified Schober test distance and significant decrease in fingertip-to-floor distance post treatment in the study (A) and control (B) group compared with that pretreatment (p > 0.001). The percent of improvement in sit and reach distance, modified Schober test distance and fingertip-to-floor distance in the study group (A) was 36.73, 33.47 and 27.07% respectively and that for control(B) group was 12.61, 8.33 and 5.96% respectively. (Table 2).

Between groups comparison

There was no significant difference between groups pre-treatment (p > 0.05). Comparison between the study (A) and control (B) groups post treatment revealed a significant decrease in MRS of the study (A) group compared with that of control (B) group (p < 0.05). Also, there was a significant increase in sit and reach distance, modified Schober test distance and significant decrease in fingertip-to-floor distance of the study (A) group compared with that of the control (B) group post treatment results (p < 0.01) (Table 2).



Table 2. Mean MRS, sit and reach test, modified schober test and fingertip-to-floor test pre and post treatment of the study(A) and control (B) groups

		Study group (A) Mean ± SD	Control group (B) Mean ± SD	MD	t- value	p-value
MRS	Pre treatment	17 ± 4.76	15.85 ± 4.53	1.15	0.78	0.43
	Post treatment	9.15 ± 3.43	11.95 ± 4.09	-2.8	-	0.02
	MD	7.85	3.9			
	% of change	46.18	24.61			
	t- value	19.34	3.68			
		<i>p</i> = 0.001	<i>p</i> = 0.002			
Sit and reach distance [cm]						
	Pre treatment	11.3 ± 1.92	11.9 ± 1.58	-0.6	-1.07	0.28
	Post treatment	15.45 ± 2.14	13.4 ± 1.87	2.05	3.22	0.003
	MD	-4.15	-1.5			
	% of change	36.73	12.61			
	t- value	-13.02	-4.45			
		<i>p</i> = 0.001	<i>p</i> = 0.001			
Fingertip to floor distance [cm]						
	Pre treatment	12.1 ± 3.8	13.2 ± 3.23	-1.1	-0.98	0.33
	Post treatment	8.05 ± 3.53	12.1 ± 2.8	-4.05	-4.01	0.0001
	MD	4.05	1.1			
	% of change	33.47	8.33			
	t- value	11.77	6.24			
		<i>p</i> = 0.001	<i>p</i> = 0.001			
Modified schober test distance [cm]	Pre treatment	12.1 ± 3.8	13.2 ± 3.23	0.25	0.52	0.59
			13.2 ± 3.23 12.1 ± 2.8	-0.35	-0.53	
	Post treatment MD	8.05 ± 3.53 -4.9	12.1 ± 2.8 -1.1	3.45	6.32	0.001
			-1.1 5.96			
	% of change	27.07				
	t- value	-8.19	-4.59			
		<i>p</i> = 0.001	<i>p</i> = 0.001			

SD: standard deviation; MD: mean difference; p-value: probability value

Discussion

The results of our study revealed that there was a significant decrease in MRS post treatment results in the study and control group compared with that pretreatment ones (p > 0.01). and there was a significant decrease in the MRS of Group A (study group) compared with that of Group B (control group) regarding post-treatment results. Also, there was a significant increase in sit and reach distance, modified Schober test distance and significant decrease in fingertip-to-floor distance post treatment results (p > 0.01) and there was a significant increase in lumbar flexibility of Group A (study group) compared with that of Group B (control group) regarding post-treatment results (p > 0.001) and there was a significant increase in lumbar flexibility of Group A (study group) compared with that of Group B (control group) regarding post-treatment results.

Regarding the significant decrease in MRS scale in the study group, Previous studies have approved the effects of exercise on reducing cardiovascular disease in postmenopausal women and health problems that occur during menopause. The type of breathing in Pilates exercise effectively promotes oxygen transfer, thereby increasing energy and insulin sensitivity; consequently, fat oxidation increases, which could reduce the total weight. Also, physical activity and exercise energy expenditures are associated with improving the body composition and increasing cardiovascular fitness and could reduce menopausal symptoms [22]. In the same line to our study K.M. Fleming et al. systematic review and meta-analysis emphasizes that Pilates is an effective intervention to enhance mental health and prevent anxiety, depression, and fatigue in elderly [26].

Our results run on the same way with Haelim Lee et al. who stated that Pilates is a suitable exercise program for elderly females because it improves physical fitness as balance and flexibility plus improving mental health as breathing control in Pilate's exercise program enhances relaxation in addition to the different exercise effect on improving muscles flexibility and strength [21].

The significant increase in lumbar flexibility in study group can be explained through the response of contractile tissue to stretching exercise and its neuro physiological effects as while applying Pilates stretching position and its subsequent effect on the musculoskeletal tissues due to activation of Golgi apparatus as Golgi tendon organ prevent alpha motor neuron activity resulting in decreasing muscle tension and lengthening of sarcomere [23].

Repetition of Pilates exercises and their different stretching positions lead to repetitive stress which will affect the plastic tissue deformation in the elastic range and will allow gradual rearrangement of ground substances and collagen fibers, also beginning with warming up phase before actual exercise program phase also help in raising the soft tissue temperature en-



suring the lengthening of the soft tissue [24] also Segal et al study results were in agreement with our study as flexibility was evaluated using the "finger-to-floor distance" test At the end of Pilates intervention [25].

The results of our study are agreed with results of Sureeporn Phrompaet et. al., that stated that Pilates exercise technique can be useful in improving flexibility, encouraging trunk and pelvic segments mobility control and It may also help in preventing injuries and dysfunction of musculoskeletal system [24].

Also, Gaskell et al., stated that Pilates group exercises patients' results were a mixture of physical benefits, including raising core muscles strength, improving posture, body awareness, flexibility, increased joint stability, and improving balance [27].

On the other side the results in group B (control group) with minimal improvement in MRS and lumbar flexibility is due to their intake of calcium and cholecalciferol as the use of both calcium and vitamin D3 supplementation can have a beneficial effect on, health-related quality of life in postmenopausal period [28, 29]. Also, this combination of both nutrients has a beneficial effect on increasing bone density, muscle strength and decreasing incidence of falls in the elderly females [30]. The study was limited by the variation in the physical and psychological status of the females and their ability to follow the instructions of exercise program and cooperation. And may be larger sample size will be needed to generalize the finding.

Conculsion

Pilate's exercise has a positive effect on different postmenopausal symptoms and increase lumbar flexibility resulting in improving post-menopausal females' quality of life.

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