C6.2: Evaluating Self-Performed Acupressure for Sleep and Chronic Pain in Older Adults Using Single Subject Experimental Methodology

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Abstract:
Introduction: Background and Significance: Sleep difficulties and chronic, nonmalignant pain are prevalent in older adults. Non-pharmacological treatments, such as acupressure, may be beneficial as the first line approach or in combination with pharmacological therapies. Research indicates the benefits of acupressure for the treatment of pain, sleep and chronic illnesses.
Purpose: The purpose of this study is to determine the feasibility of teaching acupressure to older adults and investigate the effectiveness of self performed acupressure to improve sleep quality and chronic pain.

Method(s): Methods: Phase 1 utilizes a single subject, changing criterion design to test the feasibility of teaching acupressure to older adults. A convenience sample of six older adults residing in North Florida will be recruited to learn 12 acupressure points. Points will be taught in a series of three sessions, four points per session, over two weeks. Subjects must be able to
independently identify all 12 points to complete Phase 1. Phase 2 utilizes a quasi-experimental design to investigate the effectiveness of self-performed acupressure on sleep and chronic pain in older adults. A convenience sample of 30 older adults residing in North Florida will be recruited and assigned to either an experimental or a control group. The experimental group will learn and practice 12 acupressure points for three months while the control group will receive educational material. Inclusion criteria are: adults ≥ 65 who 1) have chronic pain and difficulty falling asleep at least three times per week for at least three months, 2) ability to read and speak English, 3) live in the communities of North Florida, and 4) are cognitively intact (Mini-Mental Exam [MME] ≥24). Exclusion Criteria are: 1) co-morbidities which prevent the practice of acupressure and 2) chronic pain related to a malignant pathology. Instruments: The Brief Pain Inventory and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index will be used to measure pain and sleep quality.

Results: Study is in progress.

Discussion & Conclusions: Single subject design will enable the researcher to understand if older adults can effectively learn acupressure. This knowledge may allow the researcher to conduct Phase 2 with rigor and treatment fidelity.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

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