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SELF-MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS FOR HANDS IN SYSTEMIC SCLEROSIS: LITERATURE REVIEW

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BACKGROUND

Hands are commonly affected in systemic sclerosis (SSc). Hand care and rehabilitation are not often available and are generally restricted to specialized centers, many times far from patients' residences, which limits enrollment and adherence. Self-management programs are interesting strategies to prevent or reduce hand commitment in this pathology.

OBJECTIVE

The aim of this review was to describe the current research on self-management hand care program for patients with SSc.

METHODS

A systematic literature review was conducted focusing on self-management programs for SSc. Searches were done in the PubMed database (MEDLINE, National Library of Medicine and PubMed Central) between January 2010 and April 2020 using as search themes the descriptors: "hand", "rehabilitation", "self-management", "systemic sclerosis", or "scleroderma". Only reports in English were selected for this review. Articles were analyzed, excluding: review articles, no SSc patients, juvenile/pediatric SSc, hand involvement not as main topic, abstract not available, not in English and articles that did not present self-management in the program.

RESULTS

Eight studies about self-management programs for hands in SSc were found. Muggi et al. evaluated a concise hand finger stretching in a group of 43 SSc patients and observed significant passive ROM improvement after 3 years of follow-up with a decline in ROM in only 6 patients (14%) after 9 years. Stefanantoni et al. reported the benefits of a hand stretching program in 31 patients (improvements in Canadian Occupational Performance Measure, HAQ and SF-36 mental domain improvement) after 1 and 3 months of follow-up. Poole et al., in a study with 49 subjects, who completed a mail-delivered self-management program, also reported decreases in pain, depression and fatigue and improvements in hand function and self-efficacy for controlling pain. Subsequently, an internet version of this program was developed and tested in 16 patients with positive changes in the ability to manage care, health efficacy, fatigue and depression. An internet-based self-management website, which included hand exercises and education on Raynaud's disease and hand care, received positive feedback regarding content and presentation of the content. Landim et al. recently published two researches with 57 patients. After 1, 2 and 6 months, the patients showed pain reduction, increase of manual strength, reduction of contracture of hands, as well as reduction of disability and improvement in quality of life, frequency of hydration and heating of hands and body.

CONCLUSION

Although the small number of studies, there are promising data regarding the benefits of self-management programs for hands in SSc.