

The effect of Masai Barefoot Technology (MBT) on the quality of life of patients with chronic back pain

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Diploma Thesis November 2002

Publication: unpublished.

MBT Model: Sole 2004 and High

ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Nowadays, numerous diseases of the cardiovascular and the musculoskeletal system are prevalent in western industrialized nations. These include back pain, one of the most widespread conditions in Germany. It has reached a point where almost one out of two people experiences back pain at least once in his/her lifetime. The back pain is non-specific (of unknown etiology) in about 80% of cases. Treatment costs are high and weigh heavy on the health care system. These could be lowered with appropriate therapies.

The effects of Masai Barefoot Technology on the quality of life of patients with back pain were investigated to gain further insight into an additional “method of therapy” as well as treatment opportunities in secondary and tertiary prevention.

METHOD: A total of 24 patients, ranging in age between 54 and 71 years, participated in the study. Of these, 16 were included in the intervention group and eight in the control group. Functional capacity as well as health-related quality of life were evaluated with two standardized questionnaires: Function questionnaire Hannover Back and SF-36 Health Survey. In addition to their usual exercise program, subjects of the intervention group wore the MBT during a period of eight weeks. Once a week, the patients attended an hour of gait and postural training. The participants were asked to make notes in a training diary outside this training hours.

RESULTS: In the intervention group, a prior-post-comparison (t-test) showed an average increase in functional capacity from 73.94 to 80.2 ($p = 0.003$). Variance analysis found a

significant difference ($p = 0.047$) in the comparison of second-time questioning between the two groups.

Looking at the sum scales, the analysis of SF-36 Health Survey data revealed an improvement of the physical sum scale in the intervention group ($p = 0.009$). In addition, improvements were found in the areas of physical functioning ($p = 0.005$) and physical pain ($p = 0.001$). Variance analysis found no significant differences in the comparison of second-time questioning between the two groups.

CONCLUSION: The demonstrated improvements of the quality of life were related exclusively to the physical dimension, but not the psychological. Nevertheless, the contribution to quality of life improvements was considerable, because back pain patients predominantly suffer from physical impairments and pains. These results are confirmed by other studies, which showed that the decrease of the pain dimension is very important.

Thus it is recommended to wear MBT in everyday life and to combine it with an exercise program.