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The effects of massage therapy on pain and anxiety after surgery: A systematic review and meta-analysis

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Pain management is critical for patients after surgery, but current pain management methods are not always adequate. Massage therapy may be a therapeutic complementary therapy for pain. Many researchers have investigated the effects of massage therapy on post-operative pain, but there have been no systematic reviews and meta-analysis of its efficacy for post-operative patients. Our objective was to assess the effects of massage therapy on pain management among post-operative patients by conducting a systematic review and meta-analysis. The databases searched included MEDLINE, CINAHL and the Cochrane Library's CENTRAL. To assess the effects of massage therapy on post-operative pain and anxiety, we performed a meta-analysis and calculated standardized mean difference with 95% CIs (Confidential Intervals) as a summary effect. Ten randomized controlled trials were selected. Meta-analysis was conducted using subgroup analysis. The effect of single dosage massage therapy on post-operative pain showed significant improvement and low heterogeneity, Sternal incisions showed significant improvement in pain and low heterogeneity. The anxiety subgroups showed substantial heterogeneity. The findings of this study revealed that massage therapy may alleviate post-operative pain, although there are limits on generalization of these findings due to low methodological quality in the reviewed studies.

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