

Feasibility and Effects of Touch Massage and Nurse Led Sleep Counselling in the Treatment of Primary Insomnia

Abstract

Background: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is basically the only evidence based treatment both in short- as well as long term treatment of insomnia. Previous studies suggest that massage may have a role in initiating sleep and relaxation. This pilot study investigated the feasibility and effects of tactile massage (TM) and nurse led sleep counselling (SC) in the treatment of primary insomnia. Method: Thirty women with primary insomnia were randomized into three different groups: TM, SC or 'care as usual' (CAU) followed by a six weeks intervention period. Sleep quality was assessed with sleep diary and polysomnography.

The results show that it is feasible to treat primary insomnia with TM. 'Within' group analysis showed that the TM group experienced significant improvements in measures of subjective sleep, SC and CAU had no improvements. No significant differences were found in the 'between' group analysis. Conclusion: On the basis of the findings, we can conclude that it is feasible to use the methods of TM and SC in the treatment of primary insomnia. Especially TM shows preliminary improvements in subjective measures of sleep, results which needs confirmation in full scale research. Based on the observed effects the research protocol/design is recommended to be simplified and also to combine TM and SC as intervention in future studies.