

Tai Chi Improves Pain In Arthritis Sufferers

ScienceDaily (June 2, 2009) — The results of a new analysis have provided good evidence to suggest that Tai Chi is beneficial for arthritis. Specifically, it was shown to decrease pain with trends towards improving overall physical health, level of tension and satisfaction with health status.

Musculoskeletal pain, such as that experienced by people with arthritis, places a severe burden on the patient and community and is recognized as an international health priority. Exercise therapy including such as strengthening, stretching and aerobic programs, have been shown to be effective for arthritic pain. Tai Chi, is a form of exercise that is regularly practiced in China to improve overall health and well-being. It is usually preformed in a group but is also practiced individually at one's leisure, which differs from traditional exercise therapy approaches used in the clinic.

Recently, a new study examined the effectiveness of Tai Chi in decreasing pain and disability and improving physical function and quality of life in people with chronic musculoskeletal pain. The study is published in the June issue of *Arthritis Care & Research*. Led by Amanda Hall of The George Institute in Sydney, Australia, researchers conducted a systematic review and meta-analysis. They analyzed seven eligible randomized controlled trials that used Tai Chi as the main intervention for patients with musculoskeletal pain. The results demonstrate that Tai Chi improves pain and disability in patients suffering arthritis.

The authors state, "The fact that Tai Chi is inexpensive, convenient, and enjoyable and conveys other psychological and social benefits supports the use this type of intervention for pain conditions such as arthritis."

"It is of importance to note that the results reported in this systematic review are indicative of the effect of Tai Chi versus minimal intervention (usual health care or health education) or wait list control," the authors note. Establishing the specific effects of Tai Chi would require a placebo-controlled trial, which has not yet been undertaken.

Editor's Note: This article is not intended to provide medical advice, diagnosis or treatment.

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1. Hall et al. **The effectiveness of Tai Chi for chronic musculoskeletal pain conditions: A systematic review and meta-analysis.** *Arthritis & Rheumatism*, 2009; 61 (6): 717 DOI: [10.1002/art.24515](https://doi.org/10.1002/art.24515)

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