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INTEGRATION OF QI GONG SESSIONS INTO A RESPIRATORY REHABILITATION PROGRAM : the experience of the CF Center in Roscoff (France)

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S. Ramel[1], F. Pecha[1], O. Meurisse[1], A. Dubois[1], L. Gueganton[2] , R. Goarzin[3]

1 : Fondation ILDYS, CF Center, Roscoff, France
2 : Fondation ILDYS, Research Department, Roscoff, France,
3: Ecole WUSHU, Brest, France

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Several studies or systematic reviews report the **interest of Qi Gong (QG) and related techniques in patients with respiratory pathologies** (1; 2; 4; 5).
- The interest of techniques such as QG **as complementary therapeutic approach** is confirmed (3).
- However, **it's difficult to draw relevant scientific conclusions** (3) (6) because populations are heterogeneous; comparative groups are not randomized; practices and programs are diversified and not standardized.
- Finally, it's **essential to involve qualified professionals** with an in-depth understanding of respiratory physiology, sports medicine and pathology in order to ensure real rigor in the programs offered (7).

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OBJECTIVES

- **Experiences with CF, in France, are still quite rare.**
- Literature & **testimony of our oldest CF patient** convinced us of the potential interest of QG **to enrich our respiratory rehabilitation program** by offering an activity:
  - innovative
  - accessible to all (even to patients with limited respiratory capacity)
  - attractive even for patients who are not very athletic, or even refractory to "classic" physical activities
  - a priori easily reproducible and continued in the suites of the stay.
- **A first evaluation aims to assess feasibility of adding QG to our program & adhesion from patients & professionals.**

METHOD

1. Several members (1 MD, 2 physiotherapists, 2 sport's teachers) of our CF team were initiated to QG during a 2 days workshop supervised by a well known and qualified Qi Gong's teacher
2. QG's weekly sessions were integrated to our rehabilitation program supervised by the QG teacher from the Wushu School and our formed professionals. Each month a session was dedicated to our professionals for improving their skills.
3. From October 2019 to May 2021, all the patients admitted in our program have been invited to take part to those sessions (also free to decline). Because of the SARS covid pandemie, only 57 patients were included.
4. Thanks to a survey proposed to the patients, we'l evaluate at short (1month) and median term (3months) patient 's feelings about this new activity.

RESULTS : Short term (during the stay)

POPULATION

- N = 29 ; 16 M & 13 F
- Age m=34,5 ± 11,7 [18-69]
- FEV m=46,44 ± 19,13 [21-90] ; 7 on oxygen therapy
- Sessions between september 2019 and februar 2021 – m=2,7 ± 2,57 [1-15]
- 2 patients : no answer most questions = 27 "exploitable" questionnaires

REPRESENTATIONS OF QI GONG

- 24% (n = 7) little or no knowledge of QG; only 1 had ever practiced.
- 76% (n = 22) didn't not know at all.
- 55% (n = 16) no opinion on the effects of QG; 14% (n = 4) skeptical; 28% (n = 8) believed that QG could be beneficial for the physical and / or the psychological area.

FEELINGS ABOUT QG EFFECTS

- The most important is the feeling of calm, relaxation (m = 6.17) followed by better postural balance (m = 5.34). Muscle reinforcement (m = 3.76) and pain reduction (m = 3.79) are the least felt effects.
- The main difficulties encountered in practice are the difficulty of "letting go" and the "technical" barrier (understanding and retention of movements) for 55.5% of patients. In no case, the psychic feeling came to interfere with sessions.

FEELINGS ABOUT TRAINING PROVIDED

- The majority (74%) consider the level of training appropriate. The rest are split in half between those who consider it too high, and those, not enough.
- The theory / practice balance is considered adequate (78%). The others are similarly split between too much practice and too much theory.
- 85% consider the language used adapted.
- The teachers are considered available (100%), and the sessions convivial (96%).

GENERAL SATISFACTION

- Score (/10) : m = 7,11 ± 2,22 [2-10]
- 23 patients (85%) would recommend these QG sessions to other patients.
- However, 11 (41%) are inclined to continue after their stay while 16 (59%) are rather not.

RESULTS : « Long » term (after 3 months)

- N = 8 (28%)
- Only one continued to practice, and this is the one who benefited from the greatest number of sessions (15) during her stays. She practices every day, currently at home, but as soon as possible in Wushu school.
- For the others, the main reason for not having continued is the lack of know-how alone (N = 5), and sometimes (N=2), the lack of free time.
- Patients remain satisfied with their experience (average score = 8), and all recommend it to other patients.

CONCLUSIONS & PERSPECTIVES

- Our **partner patient** was implicated all along the process and is actually working with the QG teacher **to prepare educational supports** (video, movements description…).
  - in particular **a booklet with a theoretical part**, explaining the conscious breathing and the perception of the body through Chinese medicine **and with a practical part** with the description of eight QG movements.
- Those tools will be **available on our CF center website** to facilitate QG's continuation at home.
- After this first approach, we would like :
- **to continue to integrate this practice** of QGinto our respiratory rehabilitation program
- **to propose QG session during Out patient visit in clinic** for **adult** patients but also **teenagers or infants** especially those who are anxious and/or not interested in sports.

TESTIMONIALS from PATIENTS

- Number of sessions and their duration isn't sufficient to fully understand the approach and to feel an effect.
- It's difficult to concentrate on the movement, the breath, the projection of energy, all at the same time, in a few sessions.
- I really appreciated these sessions for their dimension on empowerment, their holistic approach, the work on the expression of emotions through the body, the poetic visualization, the connection with nature, the elements… to discover another culture and leave "just medical" approach, in a good mood.
- A great discovery! I was really able to combine exercise and breathing. If the person is really involved it's a very physical activity. I didn't expect that. I could notice how seized and rusty I was! Very effective activity, just as much as the physiotherapy gym sessions.
- It's a chance to offer us such sessions in a hospital. Medicine in France sometimes forgets to treat humans and mind. These sessions are a good complement.
- Qi Gong is very complementary to other rehabilitation activities because it takes into account the body as a whole. Renping has taught us so much! Renping's personality is such that you are already better when you see her! She shines! It's a pleasure and a chance to have been able to attend her classes. A big thank you!

TESTIMONIALS from PROFESSIONALS

- Aim is to help patients discover another way of breathing (...) to increase their breathing capacity in depth and length.
- QG comes from another culture, Chinese medicine, and therefore requires curiosity and openness. To succeed in mobilizing and animating "Qi" you have to "turn a button" and put yourself in "Qi Gong mode".
- The difficulty is to convey this principle in a few sessions and with a novice audience. We manage to awaken a certain number of patient, but not all are receptive.
- QG teaches us to breathe by going beyond our lungs. This aspect is interesting for patients with respiratory pathology, but requires imagination.
- Through readings of movement, the patient-physiotherapist relationship is built.
- On the physical level, it was necessary to adapt to the public with regard to muscle strength, flexibility, coordination and respiratory function.
- We (health professionals) also offer work on flexibility and relaxation. More and more patients are realizing that these points also deserve their attention.

Mrs R Goarzin , QG teacher

CF adults patients with one QG trained Physiotherapist

CONTACT
sophie.ramel@ildys.org

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