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IMPACT OF TAICHI ON INDEPENDENT ACTIVITIES OF DAILY LIVING OF ADULTS WITH SCHIZOPHRENIA: PRELIMINARY RESULTS FROM A RANDOMISED CONTROLLED TRIAL

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BACKGROUND: The maintenance of instrumental daily functioning has long been recognised as the focus of psychosocial care for people with schizophrenia,¹ and evidence of the efficacy of mind-body treatment methods was well-documented.² The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of Taichi exercise, a Chinese form of mind-body exercise, on self-care ability of adults with chronic schizophrenia.

METHODS: A total of 57 adults, aged 24 to 66 years (mean, 52.51; standard deviation, 9.68 years), with chronic schizophrenia were invited to participate in a randomized controlled trial composing of Taichi Group (n = 29) and treatment-as-usual control group (n = 28). Independent living ability is indexed by the Chinese version of the Lawton's Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADL). All participants were measured twice on 2 time-points: at baseline and immediate post-intervention.

RESULTS: Significant Time x Group effect on the measurement of instrumental daily living ($F(1, 55)=4.21, p \leq 0.05$) was reported. Both Taichi and control group deteriorated across time (Taichi group: 3.69 vs. 3.28; control group: 3.93 vs. 2.11), yet the control group reported higher degree of deterioration.

CONCLUSIONS: Although deterioration in instrumental self-care ability seemed irreversible for people with schizophrenia, findings of this study highlighted the buffering effect of Taichi exercise against deterioration of instrumental functioning. The findings leaned preliminary support to Taichi exercise as one of the possible psychosocial intervention strategies that might help preserving dignity in the residential healthcare setting.

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