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OPEN PEER REVIEW

Investigating the Effect of Pain Neurophysiology Education in the Treatment of Cervicogenic Headache: A Randomized Clinical Trial

Ehsan Ghasemi, Seyed Shayan Naji, Mohammad Reza Najafi, Majid Ghasemi, Abdolkarim Karimi

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About this report

This open peer review (OPR) report shows the public comments made on this article during peer review, by the reviewers, the associate editor and the editor-in-chief, for every revision round, together with the authors' replies. Comments appear only with the consent of the people who wrote them. Reviewers who chose to sign their report are named; the others are shown as "Referee". Comments are edited for language only, and confidential remarks to the editors are not included.

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1 Original submission

6 comments · 12 Mar 2023 – 9 Apr 2023

Referee 1 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 12 Mar 2023

Dear editor of the MEJRH
I hereby thank you for choosing me to review the manuscript. My comments and suggestions are presented as follows.
Abstract: The objective is well stated. In the methods, the sample selection method is not stated. Also, assessment methods and tools should be mentioned. The keywords should be written according to MeSH.
background:
It needs to be revised. The introduction explains the research problem well, but it is better to explain how PNA reduces pain. In addition, it is suggested to provide more up-to-date references.
Method:
The method of determining the sample size should be fully explained. Conventional scientific terms should be used in the manuscript (inclusion and exclusion criteria).
Describe the randomization method.
The treatment method in the PNA group should be clearly described. Was it done according to protocol? How were the number of sessions and the duration of each session determined?
Mention the validity and reliability of the assessment tools.
The discussion should be fundamentally revised.
It is suggested to add a CONSORT flowchart to the article.
Thanks

Referee 2 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 18 Mar 2023

In the Name of God

Dear Editor,
Thank you for considering me as a reviewer for this publication in your esteemed journal “The Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies”. I have provided some comments for researchers as follows:
1) In the abstract, please insert the abbreviation CH alongside the full term (cervicogenic headache).
2) Please re-edit the article because it contains many grammatical and scientific issues. Such issues could be found in the method section, under “participant”. You should explain the inclusion and exclusion criteria (not “entry, exit criteria” or “Elimination criteria”). Also, this sentence is not correct: “and being literate and it was written”.
3) Please mention which randomization method you have used in your method section.
4) Please mention your valuable suggestions for a future study.

With the best regards

Referee 3 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 8 Apr 2023

The submitted text needs native editing. Please attach and submit the native editing certificate.
The statistics protocol, software, mean, and SD should be mentioned in the sample size section.
Who applied the inclusion and exclusion criteria?

Why was the use of painkillers not important and not considered?
Blinding and randomization are not mentioned correctly.
Did the intervention group have physiotherapy?
Sessions for the intervention group are not mentioned.
Please cite ERA and the location for US treatment.
Please cite the validity and reliability of VAS, HDI, and PCS exactly.
Please check Consort 2010 and modify your paper.
Please note the p values in the tables. Rewrite the tables.
Concerning education level, VAS, HDI, and PCS, were there differences between the two groups before treatment? Please mention this in the manuscript.
Education level was considered a limitation, although the authors gathered related data. Why was it considered a limitation?
Effect
The effect of education level on the treatment was not compared between the two groups.
In the discussion, previous studies have not been covered in depth and extensively and have been mentioned very briefly.

Referee 4 Reviewer

MAJOR REVISION 8 Apr 2023

The article is very poorly written and needs to be rewritten.
CH in the second line of the method section of the abstract should be mentioned in the background section.
"Cleaved" in the method section is an incorrect term for dividing study groups. There are many inappropriate words like this throughout this article that need to be corrected.
In the conclusion section of the abstract, it should be mentioned that this protocol is only effective for pain relief and that other means of reducing disability should be used.
Most of the introduction is devoted to statistics related to headaches. We suggest summarizing these sections and focusing on the category of cognitive-behavioral pain management programs to which the techniques used in this study are relevant.
At the end of the introduction, please explain the need for this research, given that there are many systematic reviews in this area.
I reiterate that the English text of the article should be completely revised by a native speaker.
Refer to the data from the previous study used to determine the sample size.
The age range of participants is very wide. With this wide age range, how did the researcher rule out other causes of headaches?
It seems that more detailed tests should have been considered for the inclusion criteria.
No mention is made of how the groups were randomized.
Models of physiotherapy equipment are not listed. Exercises were not explained. The description of the methods lacks precision.
Is the Headache Disability Index translated into Persian? Please mention its validity and reliability.
The results section has not been written systematically and does not follow the conventions of scientific writing.

Associate Editor

MAJOR REVISION 8 Apr 2023

Major revision

Editor-in-Chief MAJOR REVISION 9 Apr 2023

Dear Authors
Based on the reviewers' and associate editor's comments, your article requires major revision. Please respond to the reviewers' comments carefully and submit the required files.

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Revision 1

AUTHORS' RESPONSE TO REVIEWERS

Authors' reply to reviewers

The next pages contain the authors' point-by-point reply to the comments of this revision round, as submitted with the revised manuscript. It is published as the authors wrote it.

Reply To Reviewers Comments

Fatemeh Ehsani

Editor in Chief

Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies

8 May 2023

Manuscript ID: 136156

Title: Investigating the Effect of Pain Neurophysiology Education in the Treatment of Cervicogenic Headache: A Randomized Clinical Trial

Dear Editor,

Thank you and the reviewers for the valuable comments on our manuscript. Below we attached a list of our corrections and detailed responses to the reviewers' comments. Enclosed please find the revision of our manuscript with marked changes. We hope that the revised manuscript meet the reviewers' suggestions.

Kind Regards,

Ehsan Ghasemi

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Reviewer # 1: Thank you very much. We tried to meet your comments accurately as follow:

1) In the abstract, please insert the CH abbreviation with the original word (cervicogenic headache),

Author's response: Your request was done. P: 1, L: 13.

2) Please re-edit the article, concerning the existence of many grammatical and scientific issues. Such issues could be found in the method section, participant. You should explain inclusion and exclusion criteria (not entry, exit criteria or Elimination criteria), also this sentence is not correct (and being literate and it was writing),

Author's response: Your request was done. P: 3, L: 99.

3) Please mention in your method section, which randomization method you have used,

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 114.

4) Please mention your valuable suggestions for future study.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 8, L: 295-298.

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Reviewer # 2: Thank you very much. We tried to meet your comments accurately as follow:

Abstract:

1) The objective is well stated.

2) In the method, the sample selection method is not stated.

Author's response: Your request was done. P: 1, L: 13.

3) Also, assessment methods and tools should be mentioned.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 1, L: 18, 19.

4) The keywords should be written according to the Mesh.

Author's response: The compound words used in this paper are not found in MeSH, but the words alone are found in MeSH. These phrases are also used as keywords in other articles.

Background:

1) It needs to be revised. The introduction explains the research problem well, but it is better to explain how PNA reduces pain. In addition, it is suggested to provide more and up-to-date references.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 2, L: 62-64.

In this article, we have tried to use the latest and most relevant references.

Method:

1) The method of determining the sample size should be fully explained.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 92-98.

2) Conventional scientific terms should be used during writing (inclusion and exclusion criteria).

Author's response: Your request was done. P: 3, L: 99.

3) Describe the randomization method.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 114.

4) The treatment method in the PNA group should be clearly described. Was it done according to a protocol? How was the number of sessions and the time of each session determined?

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 4, L: 123-127.

5) Mention the validity and reliability of assessment tools.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 5, L: 154-156. P: 5, L: 163-165. P: 5, L: 173-178.

Discussion: The discussion should be fundamentally revised.

Author's response: Additional information was added as much as possible.
P: 7, L: 248-251. P: 7, L: 264,265. P: 8, L: 275-277.

It is suggested to add Consort flowchart to the article.

Author's response: This flowchart is pasted on page 3.

Reviewer # 3: Thank you very much. We tried to meet your comments accurately as follow:

1) The submitted text needs native editing, please attach and submit the native editing certificate.

Author's response: Your request was done.

2) The statistics protocol, software, mean and SD should be mentioned in the sample size section.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 92-98.

3) Inclusion and exclusion criteria were administered by who?

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 100.

4) Why was the use of painkillers not important and not considered?

Author's response: According to the ethics committee, it was not permissible to interfere with the use of painkillers. Because the study is a clinical trial, the distribution of subjects in two groups is balanced and this problem is solved.

5) Blinding and randomization are not mentioned correctly.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 114,115.

The data was collected by a person who was completely unknowing of the 2 groups. P: 4, L: 145,146.

6) Did intervention group have physiotherapy?

Author's response: Yes. It is mentioned in line 118.

7) Sessions for intervention group is not mentioned.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 4, L: 123.

8) Please cite EREA and location for US treatment.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 4, L: 140.

9) Please cite validity and reliability for VAS, HDI, and PCS exactly.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 5, L: 154-156. P: 5, L: 163-165. P: 5, L: 173-178.

10) Please check consort 2010 and modify your paper.

Author's response: It has been tried to write the article based on the CONSORT 2010 format.

11) Please note p values in the tables. Rewrite the tables

Author's response: The P value of age and disease duration variables was added in the text. P: 5, L: 192, 193. The P value of the main variables is presented in Table 2.

12) Concerning education level, VAS, HDI, and PCS were there differences between the two groups before treatment? Please mention it in the manuscript.

Author's response: Based on the P value presented in Table No. 2, it is clear that there is no significant difference between the groups in the mentioned variables before treatment.

13) Education level was considered a limitation while authors gathered related data. Why a limitation?

Author's response: This limitation was removed from the text of the article.

14) The effect of education level on the treatment was not compared between the two groups.

Author's response: This limitation was removed from the text of the article.

15) In the discussion, previous studies have not been covered in depth and extensively and have been mentioned very briefly.

Author's response: Additional information was added as much as possible. P: 7, L: 248-251. P: 7, L: 264,265. P: 8, L: 275-277.

Reviewer # 4: Thank you very much. We tried to meet your comments accurately as follow:

1) The article is very poorly written and needs to be rewritten.

Author's response: Your request was done.

2) CH in the second line of the method section of the abstract should be mentioned in the background section.

Author's response: Your request was done.

3) "Cleaved" in the method section is an incorrect term for dividing study groups. There are many inappropriate words like this throughout this article that need to be corrected.

Author's response: Your request was done.

4) In the conclusion section of the abstract, it should be mentioned that this protocol is only effective for pain relief and that other means of improving the disability should be used.

Author's response: The conclusion section has been modified.

5) Most of the introduction is devoted to statistics related to headaches. We suggest summarizing these sections and focusing on the category of cognitive-behavioral pain management program to which the techniques used in this study are relevant.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 2, L: 62-64.

6) At the end of the introduction, please explain the need for this research, given that there are many systematic reviews in this area.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 2, L: 71-74.

7) I reiterate that the English text of the article should be completely revised by a native speaker.

Author's response: **Author's response**: Your request was done.

8) Refer to the data of the previous study from which the sample size was determined.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 92-98.

9) The age range of participants is very wide. With this high age range, how did the researcher rule out other causes of headache?

Author's response: This age range exists in other studies and this range was selected based on previous studies.

10) It seems that more detailed tests should have been considered for the inclusion criteria.

Author's response: This article is the result of a master's thesis, the conditions for inclusion criteria was compiled based on previous studies and the opinions of judges.

11) No mention is made of how to randomize the groups.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 3, L: 114.

12) Models of physiotherapy equipment are not listed. Exercises were not explained.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 4, L: 134-142.

13) Method description accuracy is low.

Author's response: Tried to correct.

14) Is the Headache Disability Index translated into Persian? Please mention its validity and reliability.

Author's response: The information requested was added to the text. P: 5, L: 163-165.

15) The results section has not been written systematically and with the literature of writing a scientific article.

Author's response: This section was written in consultation with a statistician.

2 Revision 1

4 comments · 27 May 2023 – 30 May 2023

Referee 2 Reviewer

ACCEPT 27 May 2023

Dear Editor,
Thank you for considering me as a reviewer for this publication in your esteemed journal “The Middle East Journal of Rehabilitation and Health Studies.” In my opinion, the manuscript could be accepted.

Referee 3 Reviewer

ACCEPT 29 May 2023

It is accepted.

Associate Editor

ACCEPT 29 May 2023

Accepted

Editor-in-Chief

ACCEPT 30 May 2023

Dear Authors
We are pleased to inform you that your article is accepted for publication in the MEJRHS. We hope to receive other high-quality articles from your group.