



“Qigong” Mind-Body Exercise for Elderly Care

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Dear Editor,

Qigong originated in China and has a history of nearly 5,000 years ago. “Qi” is the vital energy or life force, and “gong” is the meaning of work or skill. This is a mind-body exercise and an energetic form of movement designed to regulate and enhance the flow of “qi” inside the body. The mind-body program consists of Dao-Yin-Shu, Wu-Qin-Xi, Baduanjin, and Yi-Jin-Jing regarding medication, controlled breathing, and movement exercises. It is believed to have intense body strengthening for preventing several elder diseases.

Qigong is considered a traditional Chinese medicine practice that contains a series of graceful movements linked together in a continuous sequence. The qigong practice is constantly shifting from foot to foot with a lower center of gravity for strengthening muscle training reduces joint stress in the body. Rogers CE et al. reported that qigong helped older adults improve physical function, reduce blood pressure, decrease the fall risk of depression and anxiety. The length of intervention ranged from 3 weeks to 12 months with at least 60 minutes and 2 to 3 times weekly. It also evaluated physical and psychological outcomes and even quality of life.¹

Tsang HW et al. discovered that regular qigong practice could relieve depression, improve self-efficacy and personal well-being among elderly persons with chronic physical illness and depression. The intervention group was given 16 weeks of qigong practice, and the control group participated in a newspaper reading with the same duration and frequency. The results showed that qigong generalized to the daily task domain of the self-concept after the intervention.²

Phansuea P et al. also indicated qigong programme

was effective in reducing depression scores both in mild and moderate depression community-dwelling older adults. It was a mind-body exercise and incorporated mindful breathing. The intervention group required a 3 sessions/week 12-week course of qigong exercises while the control group participated in singing and praying with the same duration and frequency.³

Gouw VXH et al. suggested qigong as an adjunct activity for chronic disease management with potential benefits on the overall quality of life among community-dwelling older adults, such as reduced depressive symptoms and increased self-efficacy.⁴ Qigong was also significant improvements in general cognitive function, memory, executive function, and the daily problem-solving ability for preventing vascular cognitive impairment or vascular dementia.

The COVID-19 pandemic occurred in 2019, qigong was act as a traditional Chinese medicine practice to play a role in the prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation of respiratory infections which included stress reduction, emotion regulation, strengthening of respiratory muscles, reduction of inflammation, and enhanced immune function. Based on the concept of traditional Chinese medicine theory, “Ying and Yang,” “qi,” “main and collateral channels,” “essence, qi, and spirits,” “nature-life,” “qi, blood, and body fluid,” etc. Qigong enhances the flexibility of limbs and stretches the movements of the body, thus dredging the inner passages through which qi and blood circulate to promote the circulation of qi in blood to reach a healthy state including strong muscles, bones, flexible joints, and boosting the immune system.⁵ Qigong was effective to eliminate the pathogen and strengthen vital qi which helped to increase



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righteousness and enhance the body's ability to resist disease during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Up to the present, there is no limitation for qigong as it is an extremely gentle practice that does not even necessarily require the individual to stand. Many movements can be done easily and adequately. However, it must pay attention to the elderly on difficult types of qigong practice. The above information demonstrates that a qigong mind-body exercise is suitable for the elderly. It intense body strengthening for preventing several elder diseases such as improve physical and physiological functions, cardiovascular and Alzheimer's diseases. Qigong supports internal energy to regulate the qi circulation and strengthen the muscle-tendon within the practice for the whole body.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the concept, acquisition and analysis of data, drafting of the article, and critical revision for important intellectual content.

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