Clinical effects of Infrared whole-body Hyperthermia in patients with rheumatic disease

(Preliminary results)

OBJECTIVE:

Patients report positive effects of Infrared (IR) sauna whole-body hyperthermia. Therefore two studies respectively in patients with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA) and Ankylosing Spondylitis (AS) are conducted.

METHODS:

Patients with RA or AS between 18 and 70 years of age are included. They are treated during 4 weeks with a series of 8 IR sessions in a sauna cabin (30 minutes at an ambient temperature of 55°C). Before (O2), during and directly after (O2a) the first sauna treatment well-being on a Likertscale and pain, stiffness and fatigue on a Visual Analoge Scale are measured. These latter measurements are also performed before (O1, O2) and after (O3, O4) the series of 8 IR sauna treatments. Additionally over the 12 weeks study period for the RA patients' range of motion (EPM-ROM scale), physical scales of the DUTCH-AIMS2 and disease activity by means of Ritchie score, numbers of swollen joints and ESR are recorded. For AS patients BASGS (a Global Index), BASMI (a ROM-Index), BASFI (a Functional Index) and BASDAI (a Disease Activity Index) is applied. Results are all expressed as mean and standard error of mean (SEM) and where applicable also 95% confidence intervals are calculated.

Research Tables on Back Side

CONCLUSION:

Infrared sauna seems to have a positive effect upon pain, stiffness and fatigue and functional ability in RA as well as in AS patients, without increasing disease activity. Our preliminary results indicate that also clinical relevant and statistically significant beneficial effects may be expected at conclusion of the study.

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