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ABSTRACT

Background. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a multifactorial, progressive chronic lung disease. COPD was rated as the third largest cause of death by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2016. Cough and sputum are present in about 60% of COPD patients. For persons with COPD who are unable to attend the standard centre-based program, home-based pulmonary rehabilitation offers a cost-effective option.

The aim. To compare the effects of supervised and self-directed pulmonary rehabilitation on cough and sputum expectoration in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Methods. Forty COPD-diagnosed subjects with ages between 40 to 60 years were recruited for this randomized clinical trial. The participants were randomly distributed into self-managed (n=18) and supervised (n=19) groups. Data was collected using a 6-minute walk test, the Leicester Cough Questionnaire and a cough and sputum assessment questionnaire at baseline after 6 weeks post treatment.

Results. There was a significant difference found between self-managed and supervised groups for six-minute walk test with P value to be P > 0.005. While analysing LCQ, overall no significant difference was observed demonstrating between two groups with P > 0.05; besides, physical factors showed a significant difference during the pre-session which showed P = 0.004. No significant difference was found while analysing values from Cough and sputum assessment questionnaire with P > 0.05

Conclusion. Supervised exercise program and self-managed group show equal improvement in COPD patients. Self-management exercise should be encouraged for active involvement of patient during the treatment and to promote self-preventive behavior.

Keywords: sputum, cough, self-management, pulmonary rehabilitation.

INTRODUCTION

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a multifactorial, progressive chronic lung disease that causes airflow restriction (Berry & Wise, 2010). It is a complicated disease characterized by abnormalities of the airway and/or alveoli that is mostly caused by long-term exposure to noxious gases and particles

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(Vestbo, 2014). COPD is an umbrella term for chronic inflammatory lung illness, which is primarily caused by long-term hazardous inhalation and results in gradual airflow limitation – bronchial blockage (Kim & Aaron, 2018). COPD is more than simply a "smoker's cough", it is an underdiagnosed lung illness that can cause considerable quality-of-life impairment (Wurst, St. Laurent, Hinds, & Davis, 2017). It is a primary cause of chronic morbidity and mortality in the world, and it has a considerable impact on disability, quality of life, and healthcare expenses (Celli, 2010).

COPD was rated as the third largest cause of death by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2016, with 251 million cases worldwide and 3.17 million (5%) deaths in 2015 (Adeloye et al., 2015). The prevalence of COPD in Pakistan is unknown; however, an international epidemiological study published in 2012 found a frequency of 2.1 per cent in those over the age of 40 (Husain et al., 2021). The pathogenic effects of COPD inflammation cause a variety of physiological changes that influence the quality of life and survival as COPD progresses naturally (Brashier & Kodgule, 2012). The daily burden of COPD endured by an individual is defined by a variety of symptoms and their impact on patients. Dyspnea, cough, and sputum production are the most prevalent COPD symptoms, whereas wheezing, chest tightness, and chest congestion are less commonly bothersome (de los Monteros, Pena, Hurtado, Jareno, & Miravitlles, 2012). COPD can be managed by primary, secondary, and tertiary preventative measures. These range from improving smoking cessation and asthma treatment (primary), through early illness identification and subsequent risk factor adjustment (secondary), to preventing complications in individuals with established disease (tertiary) (Miravitlles et al., 2016). Smoking cessation is most important, healthcare providers are encouraged to provide patients with smoking cessation messaging and interventions, such as counselling, financial incentive schemes, and patient education (Evensen, 2010). In the absence of contraindications, tobacco dependency therapies such as varenicline, sustained-release bupropion, nortriptyline, nicotine gum, nicotine inhaler, nicotine nasal spray, and nicotine patches can be helpful as quitting aids (Cooper & Barjaktarevic, 2015). Furthermore, lowering indoor and outdoor pollution, such as biomass fuel and occupational inhalants, may necessitate governmental policy reforms as well as individual preventive measures (Price et al., 2014). Medications are used to manage COPD symptoms, reduce the frequency and severity of exacerbations, and enhance exercise tolerance and health status. Long-acting 2-agonists (LABAs), long-acting muscarinic antagonists (LAMAs), and inhaled corticosteroids (ICS) are typical COPD treatments. Within each class, the option is based on pharmaceutical availability as well as patient responses and preferences (Dhamane et al., 2017).

Pulmonary rehabilitation aims to increase HRQoL by reducing COPD symptoms, re-establishing and improving functional capacity, increasing engagement in daily activities, promoting autonomy, and restoring and improving functional ability (Blondeel, Demeyer, Janssens, & Troosters, 2018). This is accomplished by concentrating on the systemic elements of the disease that are frequent among COPD patients (Hill, Vogiatzis, & Burtin, 2013). When a person is executing tasks, the exercise component of PR increases inspiratory volume and reduces dynamic hyperinflation, both of which alleviate dyspnoea. Exercise improves muscle function, which delays exhaustion and increases exercise tolerance (Holland et al., 2013). Home-based pulmonary rehabilitation is an affordable option for those with COPD who are unable to participate in community-based rehabilitation. Less supervision would mean fewer resources would be needed, which would allow for the enrolment of more patients. In this context, the goal of the study is to compare how supervised and self-directed pulmonary rehabilitation affects cough and sputum expectoration patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

METHODS

Participants

This randomized control trial was conducted at The Physiotherapy Clinic Afridi Medical Complex Peshawar. The sample size was 36 calculated by the EPITOOL sample size calculator with a confidence level of 0.95. The Convenience sampling technique was utilized to recruit the participants and the study duration was six months. The inclusion criteria were: age from 40 to 60 years, both genders, COPD diagnosis and ability to sign informed consent form. The exclusion criteria: the inability to provide informed consent or complete a self-administered questionnaire, patients with trauma, pregnancy and breastfeeding. The participants were also withdrawn from the study when the patient developed an unfavourable condition or complication that includes (a)Fever (b)Not maintaining blood pressure (c)Insufficient urine output (d)Arrhythmias (e)Unstable vitals.

Study participants were randomly assigned into two groups by convenience sampling using a sealed envelope method for randomization. Patients were divided into two groups: one group was self-managed and the other group was managed by a supervised exercise plan.

The demographic characteristics of the 37 patients with COPD are presented in table 1. The mean age of the participants was 50.67 ± 7.34 in the Self-managed group while 50.53 ± 7.53 in the supervised group.

Participants in the Supervised group followed supervised pulmonary rehabilitation (aerobic exercises, strengthening exercises of the upper and lower limbs, and huffing and coughing) for 6 weeks plan for one hour weekly.

Participants in the Self-Managed Group followed a home-based exercise plan (aerobic exercises, strengthening exercises of upper and lower limbs and huffing and coughing) for 6 weeks one hour weekly.

Both groups were given self-management (deep breathing and self-stretching exercises of upper and lower limbs) as baseline treatment.

Outcome measurements

Physical capacity was measured by a 6-minute walk test which was developed in the 1960s: this is a simple test to evaluate the functional capacity by measuring the distance walked during a defined period of time (Balke, 1963). Cough and sputum results were measured by the Leicester Cough Questionnaire (LCQ), an English-originated self-reporting quality-of-life measure of chronic cough, developed by S.S. Birring. It consists of 19 items with a 7 point Likert response scale (range from 1 to 7), (Birring et al., 2003).

The Cough and Sputum Assessment questionnaire (CASA-Q) was developed by Bruce Crawford and his team and it targets cough and sputum by assessing these symptoms from two different approaches: descriptively (e.g., frequency of the symptom, severity of the symptom) and evaluating the impact of these two symptoms on daily activities (Crawford et al., 2008).

Ethical Consideration

The data collected from the participants were confidential, a set of ethical principles by the declaration of Helsinki were followed for recruitment and the study protocol was approved by the Research Ethical Committee (REC), The Physiotherapy Clinic Afridi Medical Complex, Peshawar (Vide letter No. 02-11/11/AMC-PT/REC/2022).

Statistical Analyses

Data was entered and analysed by using SPSS version 21. Statistical significance was set as P = 0.05. Descriptive statistics: Frequency tables, were used to show summaries of group measurements measured over time. Inferential statistics: after these using normality of the data by the Shapiro-Wilk test, non-parametric tests between two groups were applied.

RESULTS

The characteristics of the 37 patients with COPD are presented in table 1.

Variables		Self-Managed Group (n=18)	Supervised Group (n=19)		
Age (yrs. ± SD)		50.67 ± 7.34	50.53 ± 7.53		
Male n (%)		14(77.8%)	7(36.8%)		
Female n (%)		4(22.2%)	12(63.2%)		
Smoking	Current	5(27.8%)	5(26.3%)		
n (%)	Former	4(22.2%)	2(10.5%)		
	Never	9(50%)	12(63.2%)		
BMI	<18.5	4(22.2%)	6(31.6%)		
n (%)	18.5-24.9	5(27.8%)	7(36.8%)		
	25-29.9	8)44.4%)	2(10.5)		
	30-39.9	1(5.6%)	4(21.1%)		

Table 1. Characteristics of the participants

BMI: Body Mass Index

The Normality test was applied to protocol for further analysis. The test applied was Shapiro-Wilk test. Table 2 shows the test of normality for all the 3 tools. The application of the non-parametric analysis was decided because the data of all the 3 tools were continuous

Tools	P-value			
	Pre	Post		
Six Minute walk test.	.041	.008		
Leicester Cough Questionnaire.	.374	.928		
Cough & sputum assessment questionnaire.	.066	.003		

While analysing six-minute walk test scores there was a significant difference found between the self-managed and supervised groups in pre and post-analysis showing the P value to be P > 0.005 as shown in table 3.

Six	Self-Manage	ed Group	Supervised G				
Mi- nute walk test	Median(IQR)	Mean Rank	Median(IQR)	Mean Rank	U Value	P-value	
Pre (me- ters)	364(50)	16.25	378(59)	21.61	121.50	0.130	
Post (me- ters)	378(122)	19.00	521(145)	19.00	171.00	1.000	

Table 3. Between Group Analysis Six Minute Walk Test

IQR= Interquartile range.

Similarly, while analysing LCQ no significant difference was observed demonstrating P > 0.05. Physical factors showed a significant difference during the pre-session which showed P = 0.004. as shown in Table 4.

Table 4	Retween	Groun	Analysis	Leicester	Cough	Questionnaire
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Leicester cough Ques- tionnaire (Likert respon- se scale) Median(IQR)		Self-Managed Group		Supervised Group			
		Mean Rank Median(IQR)		Mean Rank		U Value	P-value
Physical	Pre	3.37(0.44)	13.81	3.75(0.38)	23.92	77.50	.004
	Post	3.37(1.39)	16.33	3.75(0.5)	21.53	123.00	.144
Psycho- logical	Pre	3.71(0.58)	18.28	3.71(0.86)	19.68	158.00	.691
	Post	3.50(0.86)	18.03	3.71(0.86)	19.92	153.50	.592
Social	Pre	3.50(1.25)	16.19	3.75(1.75)	21.66	120.50	.123
	Post	3.50(1.11)	15.75	4.00(1.5)	22.08	112.50	.073
Total	Pre	3.60(0.39)	15.53	3.73(0.63)	22.29	108.50	.057
	Post	3.50(0.73)	16.03	3.78(0.63)	21.82	117.50	.103

IQR= Interquartile range.

The cough and sputum assessment questionnaire was analysed using the Mann-Whitney U test, and the difference between both differences and the post-session self-managed and supervised group was P > 0.05, as shown in Table 5.

Cough &	Self-Managed	Group	Supervised Gro	oup		
sputum assess- ment question- naire (Likert response scale)	Median(IQR)	Mean Rank	Median(IQR)	Mean Rank	U Value	P-value
Pre	69(10.75)	21.56	63(12)	16.58	125.00	.161
Post	64(10.5)	19.44	63(5)	18.58	163.00	.807

Table 5. Between Group Analysis Cough & sputum Assessment Questionnaire

IQR= Interquartile range.

DISCUSSION

The author examined two pulmonary rehabilitation programs for severe COPD patients, each with a different level of supervision. Both methods of training enhanced exercise tolerance, although the size and extent of physiological changes were greater in patients who received supervision during their training. Patients with severe COPD who were not getting chronic oxygen therapy and had a significant loss in exercise capacity were chosen for the trial. The first was a self-monitored program that can be easily carried out by people with moderate to severe dysfunction and requires only a little extra effort from a physiotherapist. It can also be conducted even if the patient rarely leaves their home.

Our study results are of similar magnitude as the results from a supervised rehabilitation program conducted by Siest et al. in 2015, programs with maintenance training conducted by Cockram et al. in 2006 and Weiner et al. in 2004, and another supervised rehabilitation program conducted by Troosters et al. in 2000. A similar program with daily self-monitored training at home was conducted by Hernandez in 2000 (Cockram, Cecins, & Jenkins, 2006; Hernández et al., 2000; Siest et al., 2015; Troosters, Gosselink, & Decramer, 2000). A maintenance program does not necessarily sustain the effect of short- term rehabilitation program. Regarding this, the results of the study conducted by De Roos et al. in 2018, Morris et al. in 2016, and Wang et al. in 2014 showed that with less intensive maintenance programs

(monthly supervised training), physical performance declined (De Roos, Lucas, Strijbos, & Van Trijffel, 2018; Morris, Walsh, Adams, & Alision, 2016; Wang et al., 2014). Contrarily the study done by Candemir et al. in 2018 found that unsupervised home-based pulmonary rehabilitation was found to be more successful than supervised hospital-based PR in terms of enhancing exercise capacity, quality of life, dyspnoea, and psychological status (Candemir, Ergun, Kaymaz, Demir, & McCurdy, 2019). While our study shows no differences in both programs. Home visits from physiotherapists or other specialists, or monthly excursions to a hospital program, home programs necessitate a large number of resources.

Studies done by Kaasgaard et al., De Roos et al., and Holland et al., found that after a year after completing respiratory rehabilitation, there was a significant decline in functional exercise capacity and health-related quality of life. This deterioration was most likely caused by poor post-program compliance, which was unaffected by an improved program that provided more frequent contact with health experts, both in person and over the phone at home (De Roos et al., 2018; Holland et al., 2017; Kaasgaard et al., 2022). The Holland et al. 2017, study demonstrated equivalence the of a home-based PR with an 8-week. center-based PR program, with very similar costs. Interestingly, their improvement in the 6 min walk test distance was below what you might expect in a center-based pulmonary rehabilitation program (within-group differences 10.82 m, 95% CI –4.52 to 26.16) (Holland et al., 2017).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, exercise training can cause a variety of changes and adaptations results in an improvement. These alterations appear to be conditional on achieving a particular level of exercise intensity. To elicit them, a rehabilitation program under supervision is required. In comparison of both it was found that supervised exercise program and self-managed group show equal improvement in COPD patients. Self-management exercise should be encouraged for active involvement of patient during the treatment and to promote self-preventive behavior.

Conflict of interest None. Funding The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

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Savarankiškos ir prižiūrimos plaučių reabilitacijos poveikis kosuliui ir skreplių išsiskyrimui, sergant lėtine obstrukcine plaučių liga

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SANTRAUKA

Tyrimo pagrindimas. Lėtinė obstrukcinė plaučių liga (LOPL) yra daugiaveiksnė, progresuojanti lėtinė plaučių liga. Pasaulio sveikatos organizacija (PSO) 2016 m. trečiąja mirties priežastimi įvardijo LOPL. Kosulys ir skrepliavimas būdingas 60 proc. sergančiųjų. Asmenims, sergantiems LOPL, kurie negali dalyvauti standartinėje priežiūros centre vykdomoje programoje, namuose atliekama plaučių reabilitacija.

Tikslas – palyginti prižiūrimos ir savarankiškos plaučių reabilitacijos poveikį kosuliui ir skreplių išsiskyrimui pacientams, sergantiems lėtine obstrukcine plaučių liga.

Metodai. Į šį atsitiktinių imčių klinikinį tyrimą buvo įtraukta 40 tiriamųjų su diagnozuota LOPL, kurių amžius nuo 40 iki 60 metų. Dalyviai buvo atsitiktinai suskirstyti į savarankiškai valdomos (n=18) ir prižiūrimos (n=19) reabilitacijos grupes. Duomenys buvo renkami naudojant 6 min. ėjimo testą, Lesterio kosulio klausimyną ir kosulio bei skreplių įvertinimo klausimyną tyrimo pradžioje bei praėjus šešioms savaitėms po gydymo.

Rezultatai. Buvo nustatytas reikšmingas skirtumas tarp savarankiškai valdomų ir prižiūrimų grupių 6 min. ėjimo testo metu, kai skirtumas buvo p>0,05. Analizuojant Lesterio kosulio klausimyną reikšmingas skirtumas tarp dviejų grupių, kai p>0,05, nepastebėtas, be to, fiziniai veiksniai reikšmingai pagerėjo (p=0,004). Analizuojant kosulio ir skreplių vertinimo klausimyno vertes, reikšmingo skirtumo nerasta (p>0,05).

Išvada. Abi taikytos programos teigiamai veikė tiriamųjų būklę, tačiau nenustatyti reikšmingi skirtumai tarp prižiūrimos ir savarankiškai valdomos mankštos programų. Reikėtų skatinti savikontrolės pratimus, kad pacientas aktyviai dalyvautų gydymo procese ir būtų skatinamas saviprevencinis elgesys.

Raktažodžiai: skrepliai, kosulys, savikontrolė, plaučių reabilitacija.

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