

HOLISTIC-INTEGRATIVE

APPROACH TO POSTCOVID SYNDROME USING THE BOWEN TECHNIQUE/THERAPY

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Summary

Introduction: The Bowen technique is a therapeutic approach to body work that involves rotating movements over soft tissues. Postcovid syndrome shows the symptomatology of a wide range of symptoms such as neurocognitive, gastrointestinal, musculoskeletal and psychological. The aim of this study was to monitor the impact of the Bowen therapy/technique in a patient with postcovid syndrome.

Therapy/Techniques: A 42-year-old patient diagnosed with postcovid syndrome was given the Bowen therapy once a week for 9 weeks. After a two-week break, we continued with one-week therapies for another 4 weeks. After a break of 4 weeks, we applied 3 more therapies.

Results: A significant reduction in pain was observed according to the VAS scale. From the initial testing till the first break, the pain was moderately and the other symptoms were significantly reduced, and during the second and third breaks the pain was significantly reduced.

Conclusion: The Bowen technique can significantly contribute to the relief of symptoms in patients with post covid.

Introduction:

The Bowen technique is a therapeutic approach to body work based on the clinical work of Mr Thomas Ambrouz Bowen. It is about an increasing number of approaches, each based on the conclusions and interpretations of a particular person who was treated by Bowen. The Bowen technique involves unique rotating movements over soft tissues that are applied on the specific locations of a body (1).

In the mid-1950s, the Bowen technique appeared in Australia that began to spread very quickly and easily due to its holistic effect and influence on ANS (Autonomic Nervous System, bringing the sympathetic and parasympathetic parts into balance), receptors (proprio and exteroceptors), lymphatic circulation, fascia, tender points as well as the releasing of endorphins ('feel-good hormones'), easy applicability and a small number of contraindications. The only condition by its creator was that anyone who wants, regardless of profession, can learn and practice this technique. His students founded the Academy in the 1980s, which led to the spread of the technique throughout Europe. It is recognized in Australia by public and private health insurance, as well as in the UK. The Bowen technique came to Serbia in 2009. So far, there are over 60 certified and registered therapists. In 2020, the world survived the most dramatic period

in the last century due to the pandemic and Covid19 disease caused by the Sars-CoV-2 virus. Even if the current literature on postcovid symptoms is still in its early stages, various symptoms are reported: neurocognitive (brain fog, fainting, loss of attention, confusion), autonomic (chest pain, tachycardia), gastrointestinal (diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting), respiratory (fatigue, dyspnea, cough, sore throat), musculoskeletal (myalgia, altralgia), psychological (post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, insomnia) (2-7) Due to the problems and prevalence of Covid 19 in the world, we believe that it is important to show the application of this technique/therapy to postcovid syndrome.

The aim of this study was to point out the improvement of clinical efficacy in relieving pain and other subjective symptoms in a patient with postcovid syndrome.

CASE DESCRIPTION

A patient N. D. is 42 years old, a teacher by profession. She was infected with Covid in March 2021. According to her, she had milder symptoms, but the inflammation of the sinuses during the covid was very strong. Problems occur in the postcovid period and she turns to a neurocardiologist (BM) who diagnoses "Autonomic Neuropathy" with the explanation: "Extreme variation of pulse and pressure characteristic of multisystem inflammatory syndrome during orthostatic test". Among the subjective problems, she cites pain in the eyes as intensive, narrowed visual field, instability in gait. She constantly repeats that she has a feeling that someone hit her in the head and that there is a feeling of dizziness, she feels pain in the hips, back and groin and she also reports painful menstrual cycles. Because of these problems, she became very anxious, withdrawn and insecure. Since she is a teacher and works at school, it is a problem for her to teach and interact with students. She heard about Bowen from a friend and on her recommendation decided to try with the treatments/therapy.

The method/therapy/technique we used was BRP or bowen-relaxing movement. The movement itself consists of three phases: slack - pulling the skin while avoiding moving the tissue underneath, challenge - pressure on the muscle fibers as vertically as possible with a delay of about 3 seconds and rolling - movement over the muscle to return to its original state after stretching. Each BRP is followed by a mandatory break of at least 2 minutes. It is necessary for the therapist to leave the room after the movement so that the patient can relax as much as possible. The mentioned movements are grouped into a series of movements called BRP1, BRP2 and BRP3, which are performed in the specific order and on certain locations of the body. Movements are also grouped into specific procedures for specific parts of the body or organ systems. The treatment itself is carried out once a week, preferably for seven days. In a 42-year-old patient diagnosed with postcovid syndrome, the Bowen therapy was applied once a week for a period of 9 weeks. After a 2-week break, we continued with one-week therapies for another 4 weeks. After a break of 4 weeks, we applied 3 more therapies. We used the Visual-Analogue Scale 0 to 10 (VAS) to assess pain. We drew a straight line with a ruler, marked the beginning with 0 (no pain) and the end with 10 (maximum pain). Then the examinee marked the point on that line with a dot that most closely described her experience of pain in the last 24 hours.

RESULTS:

A significant reduction in pain was observed in the patient according to the VAS scale. From the initial testing to the first break, the pain and other symptoms gradually decreased, only to disappear completely during the second and third breaks.

Date of therapy	Procedures applied	Subjective description of the patient's condition
02.10.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3	She feels better, her field of vision is wider, she sleeps better, but she still feels anxious. An intensive feeling of pressure in the area of the small pelvis and bladder while standing. VAS9
10.10.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, pelvic procedure	Less pressure in the pelvis, no feeling that it is pulling her down. More motivated, more stable, better ballance. Headaches and radiating pain on the rotation of the head and neck occured as well as lateral movement of the eyeballs. VAS9
17.10.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, pelvic procedure	She says she feels better, although she still has a feeling of imbalance. But the menstrual cycle is less painful and she feels less anxious.
24.10.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, respiratory procedure	She feels better in general. She says that everything is slowly coming into place. But sinuses pain and nasal speech occur.
31.10.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, TMJ, sinus procedure	She says she feels better and that she feels much less pain in her sinuses. VAS7
07.11.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, TMJ2 (temporomandibular joint procedure)	She reports a completely painless menstrual cycle and feeling less dizzy. She says she feels even better! VAS5
15.11.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, kidney and hamstrings procedures	She had a meeting with a potential boyfriend, she was a little emotionally shaken, but her condition and field of vision improved, she feels less and less dizzy.

22.11.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, sternal procedure	During the whole week she felt shivers and tingles all over her body. She says she wasn't scared because she knew that it was Bowen that was working. The field of vision is much better. Generally stable and smiling! VAS3
29.11.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, knee and joint procedures	Calmer, safer, she started with private lessons. She doesn't feel anxious. Menstrual cycles completely painless.
13.12.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, kidney and shoulder procedures	There was a break for two weeks. She reports that she feels great! Cheerful, relaxed. The field of vision has almost completely expanded. She feels stable, there is no feeling of imbalance. She reports a problem with sinuses (it was a cold weather).
20.12.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, sinus procedure, TMJ2 (temporomandibular joint)	Her sinuses are better, she has a feeling that her eyes have opened. She says that she is getting better and better, but she has a feeling that she needs more procedures applied.
27.12.2021	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, pelvis procedure	She says she only needs a little bit for her field of vision to be complete. Everything else is fine.
04.01.2022	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, coccyx procedure, TMJ	All the same as the previous time. The situation has not changed.
31.01.2022	Brp1, Brp2, Brp3, kidney procedure	There was a break due to school holidays. During the holidays, she felt great, but towards the end, she began to feel mild tension and nervousness. Menstrual cycles are painless, physical condition is good, there is no

		problem with balance, her sinuses are fine. She quite easily gets through 6 classes at school. VAS2
07.02.2022	Brp1,Brp2, Brp3, respiratory procedure, TMJ (temporomandibular joint)	She feels great physically! No pain, no feeling of heaviness in the pelvis. She regained her self-confidence, goes out, hangs out. She says she needs only a tiny bit for her field of vision to be complete.
14.02.2022	Brp1,Brp2, Brp3, sternal and lymph procedures	Physically she feels great. She is mentally stable, calm, there is no tremor in her hands, she no longer feels fears of falling and instability. Her field of vision is excellent, she can see widely. She says that she feels relaxed, as if everything is flowing easily. Students at school noticed the change, they told her she was shining! She feels at peace.

Tabela1

DISCUSSION

In the first 9 weeks we noticed a significant reduction in pain, from VAS 9 at the beginning to VAS 3 at the end of the 9th week. In the first 6 weeks, there was a complete loss of pain before and during the menstrual cycle. The feeling of heaviness in the small pelvis disappeared after 2 treatments, which greatly contributed to the reduction and later, after the 9th treatment, a complete disappearance of the feeling of anxiety, which was very intensive at the beginning. The improvement of the visual field occurred after the first treatment, and in the first 9 weeks it significantly improved. There was also a significant reduction in dizziness which contributed to the fear of falling and general anxiety and a moderate improvement in physical shape.

Sinus problems occurred during the 4th treatment but after the 5th treatment the symptoms significantly decreased. We observed that there was a significant reduction of postcovid symptoms. Already after the first break and during the second series of treatments which lasted for 4 weeks, the patient felt a concrete improvement primarily in improving balance, and almost completely expanding the visual field. The problems with sinuses returned, but to a much lesser extent and in a short term and the symptoms were successfully reduced after one treatment.

During the 3rd series, a significant progress was noticed in the increase of physical shape and complete loss of brain fog and dizziness that were present at the beginning. At the end of this study, the patient is in excellent physical shape, there is no pain, no problems with balance, completely regains her self-confidence and she is mentally stable (no more tremors that were present before).

The authors have not found studies in the literature that monitor the effect of the Bowen therapy in patients with postcovid syndrome so far. This is also one of the reasons why we decided to describe this case.

Kopczyńska et al. indicate that the Bowen technique is a specific form of therapy and differs from generally known and applied **methods/therapies/techniques**. They realize that the problem in creating research on the effectiveness of this therapy is in the individual approach to the patient, because for one person it can be an ideal solution, while for others there should be a completely different approach. (8)

CONCLUSION

Based on the previous results, we can conclude that the Bowen method significantly affects the reduction of pain measured by the VAS scale, eliminates the symptoms of anxiety and improves the width of the visual field. This **therapy/technique** can be recommended for patients with postcovid syndrome.

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