



Abstract #1195

Title: Gait, balance and mobility in Parkinson's disease: Improvements after use of a DVD providing training in Alexander technique

Category: Scientific

Topics: Comprehensive Care

CC 11. Self-management, empowerment, coping strategies

WPC POSTER PRESENTATION INFO

Poster Session 1

Thursday, September 22 @ 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM

Exhibit Hall B, Level 1 Poster Board #P21.03

WPC POSTER TOUR INFO

Poster Tour 17

Thursday, September 22 @ 5:15 PM - 6:45 PM

Presenting Author:

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Objective: To measure effectiveness of an Alexander technique (AT) educational DVD designed to train Parkinson's patients to practice and reinforce skills for improved alignment, mobility, balance and gait so as to increase ease and confidence in activities of daily living (ADLs).

Background: AT is a method of mind-body education to improve ease, efficiency and confidence in ADLs. Studies indicate that AT can help people living with Parkinson's in ADLs. Participants in one AT study reported "subjective improvements in balance, posture and walking, as well as increased coping ability and reduced stress. (Stallibrass C, 2002) A study of an AT-like intervention reported improved postural alignment, reduced postural sway, improved torso mobility, and smoother movement during step initiation, likely indicating better movement efficiency. (Cohen RG, 2015) Developing literature indicates positive potential results for retention. (Stallibrass C, 2005)

Methods: Protocols used in this DVD are based on over 6 years of practice with 50+ Parkinson's patients in mid-stage of severity at the Jewish Community Center (JCC) in Manhattan through the Edmond J. Safra Wellness Program, in partnership with The Marlene and Paolo Fresco Institute for Parkinson's and Movement Disorders at NYU Langone Medical Center--a National Parkinson Foundation Center of Excellence. Protocols were developed to provide training in fall prevention and to help patients improve balance and gait, learn how to "unfreeze," speak more loudly and clearly, move more easily, increase confidence and reduce anxiety. Of primary importance is learning simple, effective mental instructions to positively impact patients' self-organization for movement. AT principles were delivered by group classes with hands-on and verbal instruction in a series of gentle movement sequences. This DVD is designed so the Parkinson's patient can practice these protocols at home with the objective of long-term retention of improvements in ADLs. The DVD's effectiveness will be measured through patient and partner surveys.

Results: All patients who took classes at the JCC reported subjective improvements, such as: less falling, less "freezing," reduction in anxiety, more ease in motion, and improved gait and speech. Effectiveness is enhanced by cues taught to care partners for support during patients' ADLs. The Alexander DVD will be released in the fall of 2016. Follow-up surveys of patients and partners will be analyzed in early 2017.