
Efficacy of physiotherapy management and ayurvedic management of knee joint osteoarthritis

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Osteoarthritis (OA) results in pain and stiffness in joints of affected individuals restricting the performance of daily activities. The main management methods used in Sri Lanka are ayurvedic management and physiotherapy management. The present study was conducted to evaluate the two main methods of management, physiotherapy and ayurveda, of knee joint osteoarthritis and to identify factors influencing the selection of the particular method by the patient. Two groups of patients, who were undergoing ayurvedic (n=55) and physiotherapy (n=55) management for OA in the knee joints were enrolled in the study. Severity of suffering was assessed using a self administered standard Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Osteoarthritis Index (WOMAC) questionnaire, with slight modification. The follow-up assessment of same participants were done after 3 months, using the same questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised of 3 sections, pain, difficulty of performing daily activities (DPDA) and stiffness and a score was given to each response. In the follow-up assessment, there was a significant reduction of pain ($p<0.001$), DPDA ($p<0.001$) and WOMAC total score ($p<0.001$) in both types of management groups and the reductions were comparable between the two groups. Although the stiffness has been significantly reduced ($p=0.001$) in physiotherapy group, this reduction was not statistically significant ($p>0.05$) in ayurvedic group. Socio-economic factors such as age, gender, educational level and employment did not have influence on making the choice between management methods by patients.

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