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STUDY OF EDEMA REDUCTION PATTERNS DURING THE TREATMENT PHASE OF COMPLEX DECONGESTIVE PHYSIOTHERAPY FOR EXTREMITY LYMPHEDEMA

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ABSTRACT

Shortening the treatment phase of complex decongestive physiotherapy (CDP) is extremely important both for individual patients and medical economics. In 83 patients with stage II unilateral secondary extremity lymphedema (31 upper extremities and 52 lower extremities), the daily changes in the volume of affected extremities during the treatment phase of CDP were prospectively investigated. For the upper extremity lymphedemas, the biggest change was seen between days 1 (100% residual edema rate) and 2 (46.0±2.7%; mean±SD) of therapy with a 54.0% reduction ($P<0.0001$). Between days 2 and 3 (38.0±2.6%) of therapy, there was an 8.0% reduction ($P<0.05$). From days 3 to 6 of therapy, slight changes ranging from 0.2 to 3.2%/day were seen. For the lower extremity lymphedemas, the biggest change was seen between days 1 (100%) and 2 (44.5±2.1%) of therapy with a 55.5% reduction ($P<0.0001$). Between days 2 and 3 (33.5±2.6%) of therapy, there was an 11.0% reduction ($P<0.001$). The daily volume changes from days 4 to 6 were slight, ranging from 0.1 to 1.0%/day. During the treatment phase of CDP, the largest volume changes were seen soon after the start of therapy.