

ABSTRACT FOR CONSORTIUM OF MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS CENTERS 2008
POSTER SESSION:

Title: Patient Education: Using Relaxation and Guided Imagery for MS: Lowering Anxiety Associated with MS & MS Injections

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Abstract:

Background: Stress and anxiety, especially surrounding disease modifying drug injections (DMT) are major stumbling blocks to adherence. Missed injections due to anxiety are frequent and are a major factor in reduced efficacy. Guided Imagery (GI) techniques reduce anxiety that accompany chronic illnesses and painful medical procedures.

Objective: This study evaluates the efficacy of GI among Relapsing Remitting MS (RRMS) patients who experience anxiety, including injection anxiety.

Methodology: RRMS patients were taught GI at 6 sites following an initial assessment of anxiety and diagnostic MS information. Relaxation training preceded a MS specific GI script aimed at lowering anxiety, injection anxiety and the perception of DMTs as a healing ally. The scripted GI CD was given to patients to practice daily for 2 weeks.

The anonymous Workshop Evaluations were analyzed according to participants' ability to become deeply relaxed, experience reduction of anxiety symptoms and perception of GI as a helpful intervention. Questionnaires were analyzed for perceived value of workshop, level of anxiety pre and post workshop, participant satisfaction with results. Also patients indicated the value of GI to lower anxiety and injection anxiety.

Results: Final results will be presented at The CMSC Conference. To date, 78% of participants returned workshop evaluations. Of those, 98% indicated they became deeply relaxed, 89% found GI to be a helpful technique, and 83% reported lowered anxiety.

To date, 35% returned the Follow-up Questionnaires. 97% reported a lowering of anxiety. Of those, 55% specifically reported reduced injection anxiety and 45% reported reduced general anxiety as evidenced by improved sleep, confidence, reduced muscle tension, pain and stress and renewed energy. 90% found the workshop to be of value.

Conclusion: Guided Imagery was found to be effective in lowering general anxiety and injection anxiety in most RRMS patients.