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Controlled whole body vibration to decrease fall risk and improve health-related quality of life of nursing home residents.

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Abstract

OBJECTIVE: To investigate the effects of whole body vibration in the elderly. **DESIGN:** Randomized controlled trial. **SETTING:** Nursing home. **PARTICIPANTS:** Forty-two elderly volunteers. **INTERVENTIONS:** Six-week vibration intervention plus physical therapy (PT) (n=22) or PT alone (n=20). **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** We assessed gait and body balance using the Tinetti test (maximum scores of 12 for gait, 16 for body balance, 28 for global score), motor capacity using the Timed Up & Go (TUG) test, and health-related quality of life (HRQOL) using the Medical Outcomes Study 36-Item Short-Form Health Survey (SF-36). **RESULTS:** After 6 weeks, the vibration intervention group improved by a mean +/- standard deviation of 2.4+/-2.3 points on the gait score compared with no score change in the control group (P <.001). The intervention group improved by 3.5+/-2.1 points on the body balance score compared with a decrease of 0.3+/-1.2 points in the control group (P <.001). TUG test time decreased by 11.0+/-8.6 seconds in the treated group compared with an increase of 2.6+/-8.8 seconds in the control group (P <.001). The intervention group had significantly greater improvements from baseline on 8 of 9 items on the SF-36 compared with the control group. **CONCLUSIONS:** Controlled whole body vibration can improve elements of fall risk and HRQOL in elderly patients.

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