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Randomized Controlled Trial *Rheumatol Int.* 2018 Nov;38(11):2045-2052.

doi: 10.1007/s00296-018-4134-x. Epub 2018 Aug 31.

Comparative Study of Shockwave Therapy and Low-Level Laser Therapy Effects in Patients With Myofascial Pain Syndrome of the Trapezius

Márta Király¹, Tamás Bender², Katalin Hodosi³

Affiliations

PMID: 30171341 DOI: [10.1007/s00296-018-4134-x](https://doi.org/10.1007/s00296-018-4134-x)

Abstract

The objective of the study was to compare the effects of shockwave therapy and laser therapy on pain, neck functionality, and quality of life in patients with myofascial pain syndrome of the trapezius. 61 patients (> 18 years) were randomly allocated to two treatment groups: (1) 31 patients received soft laser therapy once daily in a 3-week period for a total of 15 sessions, (2) 30 patients received shockwave therapy once in a week for 3 weeks, totalling 3 treatments. Resting pain and

pain tolerance were assessed by a 100 mm visual analogue scale; functional status and quality of life were measured by specific questionnaires (Neck Disability Index, SF-36) before and after the 3-week therapy and at the 15th week follow-up visit. All measured parameters improved significantly in both groups at week 3 and week 15. Comparing the two groups, patients receiving shockwave therapy demonstrated significantly better changes in pain tolerance (mean between-group differences at visit 1-0 = 14.911, 95% CI = 2.641-27.182, mean between-group differences at visit 2-0 = 17.190, 95% CI = 4.326-30.055 in the left trapezius), neck functionality (mean between-group differences at visit 1-0 = 0.660, 95% CI = -1.933 to 3.253, mean between-group differences at visit 2-0 = 1.072, 95% CI = -2.110 to 4.254), and in all domains using SF-36 QoL questionnaire. The only parameter in which the laser group showed significantly higher benefits was at week 15 for resting pain (mean between-group differences at visit 2-0 = -1.345, 95% CI = -14.600 to 11.910). The results of our study point to a conclusion that both laser and shockwave therapy are effective in myofascial pain syndrome, though we found shockwave therapy to be somewhat more beneficial. Clinical trial registration number [NCT03436459](https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03436459) (<https://clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT03436459>).

Keywords: ESWT; Laser therapy; MPS.

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