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Sleep Quality - Impact of Relaxation Techniques and Autogenic Training in Patients Diagnosed with Insomnia

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Objectives: Analyze quantitatively and qualitatively, the impact of relaxation techniques and autogenic training program on sleep quality in patients with insomnia related to anxiety disorder or depression.

Methods: The study went on for six months. Each subject completed twelve group sessions, which took place always on the same weekday and at the same time. During the sessions, subjects were taught respiratory training techniques, Schultz's Autogenic Training (inferior and superior cycles), Jacobson's progressive relaxation, creative visualization and meditation, as well as group exercise dynamics and the hug technique. To evaluate results, in sleep quality, the Insomnia Severity Index (ISI) was applied, in the beginning and in the last session of the program. The data was statistically analyzed using SPSS version 19.0.

Results: A total of 28 patients were enrolled: 22 were female and 6 male, with a mean age of 42.2 years. There was a statistical significant ($p=0.007$) decreased in the insomnia severity level (from 16.36 to 11.89; i.e. moderate to mild). Subjectively, the patients demonstrated satisfaction with the improvement in sleep pattern, with lower interference in performance of daily tasks, as well a decrease in the inconvenience caused by a sleep disorder. There was also improvement in mood, vigor, self-esteem and self-control.

Conclusions: The most common causes of insomnia are cognitive and emotional dysfunctions. Our results shows that psychopharmacological therapy, combined with relaxation techniques and autogenous training programs, that can be learned and implemented independently, can help improve sleep quality. Further studies are needed to validate these results in other populations.