

Self-perceived effectiveness of the use of a static magnetic pendant (Biostabil 2000®): a mixed methods analysis of the spontaneous feedback of its users.

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Abstract

Background

Static magnet field (SMF) therapy is used world-wide via a permanent magnet attached to the skin by people for self-care purposes, e.g. pain relief. However, there is insufficient scientific evidence proving the effectiveness of SMF therapy due to differences in type and strength of magnets used, and conditions treated. Moreover, it is unknown to what amount the effect of SMF therapy can be explained by placebo-effects.

Aim

The aim of this study was to investigate the spontaneous feedback of users of a commercial static magnetic pendant (Biostabil 2000®) to gain better understanding of self-perceived health benefits and underlying mechanisms.

Methods

Mixed methods were used cross-sectionally, using a quantitative (contents-analyzes), and qualitative (IPA) method in analyzing written feedback (letters).

Results

652 letters could be retrieved. 586 contained sufficient information to meet the inclusion criteria. 44% of the letters were written to the manufacturer to show gratitude, 20% was written to complain about the poor quality of the pendant. All users, including those complaining, were highly satisfied in using the magnet, and the far majority reported having experienced health benefits e.g. pain reduction, increased energy and vitality. Initial expectations were low, but once applying the magnet users expressed strong faith in its effectiveness, and became strongly attached to it. Negative news coverage did not change their point of view.

Conclusion

People perceive health benefit from SMF therapy (increased vitality and/ or pain relief). The placebo-effect, involving induced neurotransmitter activity in the brain, may be largely, though not entirely, responsible for the health benefits perceived.