



SIMPLIFIED PHYSIOTHERAPY METHODS IN NURSING PRACTICE

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Abstract. *Physiotherapy is an important part of the treatment and rehabilitation of patients. In nursing practice, simple and safe physiotherapy procedures can be performed by trained nurses under a physician's prescription, which makes care more accessible and reduces the load on specialized departments. This article describes the main simplified physiotherapy methods used in nursing, including thermotherapy, cryotherapy, hydrotherapy, therapeutic massage, therapeutic exercise and inhalation therapy. It also outlines safety rules, contraindications and the role of the nurse in teaching patients to continue simple procedures at home.*

Keywords: *physiotherapy, nursing, rehabilitation, thermotherapy, cryotherapy, massage, therapeutic exercise, patient safety.*

1. Introduction

Physiotherapy uses natural and artificial physical factors such as heat, cold, water, light, electric current, movement and manual techniques to prevent disease, relieve symptoms and restore function. It is widely used in neurology, orthopedics, cardiology, pulmonology, pediatrics and the care of older adults.

Complex apparatus-based procedures require specialized equipment and a trained physiotherapist. However, many everyday patients, especially in primary health care, polyclinics and home care, benefit from simplified physiotherapy methods. These are procedures that are easy to perform, need little or no special equipment, have a low risk of complications and can be carried out by a nurse who



has been properly trained. The aim of this article is to review such methods and to emphasize the nurse's role in applying them safely and effectively.

2. The Concept of Simplified Physiotherapy

Simplified physiotherapy means the use of basic physical procedures that are technically simple, inexpensive and safe when the rules are followed. Its main advantages are:

- **Accessibility:** procedures can be provided in clinics, hospital wards and at the patient's home.
- **Low cost:** most methods use ordinary materials such as warm water, ice packs, towels and basic exercise aids.
- **Safety:** the risk of side effects is low when the physician's prescription and the nurse's technique are correct.
- **Patient participation:** patients and their families can learn many methods and continue them independently.

3. Main Simplified Methods

3.1. Thermotherapy (heat therapy). Heat is applied with warm compresses, heating pads, warm water bottles or warm baths. It improves local blood circulation, relaxes muscles, reduces stiffness and helps relieve chronic pain. The nurse should check the temperature of the heat source, protect the skin with a cloth layer, limit the procedure to about 15–20 minutes and observe the skin regularly for redness or burns.

3.2. Cryotherapy (cold therapy). Cold is applied with ice packs or cold compresses wrapped in cloth. It narrows blood vessels, reduces swelling, bleeding and inflammation, and decreases pain in the first hours after bruises, sprains and similar injuries. Cold should not be placed directly on the skin, and the session usually does not exceed 15–20 minutes.

3.3. Hydrotherapy. Hydrotherapy includes warm and contrast baths, foot and hand baths, wet wraps and compresses. Water has thermal and mechanical effects that calm the nervous system, improve circulation and ease muscle tension. Water



temperature and the duration of the procedure must be set according to the patient's condition and the doctor's order.

3.4. Therapeutic massage. Classical massage, performed with stroking, rubbing, kneading and gentle tapping, improves blood and lymph flow, reduces muscle spasm, supports tissue nutrition and helps prevent pressure ulcers in bedridden patients. A nurse may use basic massage techniques on healthy skin areas, avoiding inflamed, injured or tumor-affected areas.

3.5. Therapeutic exercise. Simple exercises, including breathing exercises, passive and active joint movements and early mobilization, help prevent complications of bed rest such as muscle weakness, contractures, stagnant pneumonia and thrombosis. Exercises must be adapted to the patient's age, diagnosis and level of tolerance and should progress gradually.

3.6. Inhalation therapy. Steam or nebulizer inhalations with prescribed solutions or herbal preparations moisten the airways, ease coughing and help clear mucus in respiratory diseases. The nurse must control the temperature, the duration and the hygiene of the equipment.

4. Safety Rules and Contraindications

Even simple procedures can harm a patient if they are used incorrectly. The nurse should follow these basic principles:

- **Perform procedures only on a physician's prescription and within the nurse's professional competence.**
- **Explain the procedure to the patient, obtain consent and check for allergies and sensitivity of the skin.**
- **Check the temperature of heat, cold and water, and monitor the skin and the patient's general condition during the procedure.**
- **Stop the procedure immediately if the patient reports pain, dizziness, burning or other discomfort.**
- **Record the procedure and the patient's reaction in the medical documentation.**



General contraindications include acute infections with high fever, bleeding tendency, malignant tumors, severe cardiovascular insufficiency, skin diseases or damage in the treated area, and loss of skin sensitivity, which increases the risk of burns or frostbite.

5. The Role of the Nurse

The nurse is the specialist closest to the patient and therefore plays a central role in simplified physiotherapy. Her or his responsibilities include assessing the patient's condition, preparing the equipment and the environment, performing the procedure correctly, observing the response and reporting any changes to the physician. An equally important task is patient education. By teaching the patient and the family how to apply warm or cold compresses, perform breathing exercises and carry out simple movements at home, the nurse helps to maintain the results of treatment, shortens recovery and improves quality of life.

For this reason, nursing education should include both theoretical knowledge and practical training in physiotherapy methods. Practice with models, role-play and supervised work in clinical settings help students develop confidence, accuracy and a responsible attitude toward patient safety.

6. Conclusion

Simplified physiotherapy methods are an effective, affordable and safe part of modern nursing care. When they are prescribed correctly, performed with proper technique and combined with patient education, they relieve pain, speed up rehabilitation and prevent complications. Strengthening the practical training of nursing students in these methods will improve the quality of care and make rehabilitation services more accessible to the population.

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