

Pulsed Radiofrequency Energy For Intractable Pain

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Purpose

Pulsed radiofrequency energy (PRE) has recently been successfully used for treatment of painful surface wounds. The electromagnetic wave is classified as "radio" is longer than ultrasound, microwave, infrared, and laser waves. The purpose of this study was to determine if PRE has therapeutic benefits in intractable pain patients with sub-surface, closed-compartment pain sites as it does with painful, surface wound sites.

Method

A PRE device with a square, flat, skin surface contact approximately 8 inches on a side and which delivers a pulsed wave of 27.12MHz was used in this study. Fourteen (14) adult severe, intractable pain patients who were maintained on opioids and who had sub-surface pain sites were studied. Initial treatment with PRE was 5 to 10 minutes twice a day for 30 days. If the patient felt the treatment was beneficial, they could increase the time and frequency of treatment and continue it up to 90 days.

Results

Immediate pain relief which lasted up to four hours occurred in seven (7, 50.0%) patients. Four (4, 28.6%) of the patients felt no relief within 30 days and discontinued treatment. Seven (7, 50% perceived pain relief in the first 30 days and continued in treatment for 2 to 8 weeks after which time the patient felt no further relief with PRE. Three (3, 21.4%) patients received great pain relief and requested treatment after the 90 day, trial period.

Conclusions

PRE was perceived by some severe intractable pain patients with sub-surface pain sites to provide pain relief and be beneficial. PRE appears to be an effective, new electromagnetic treatment that warrants further clinical trials.