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Effectiveness of aerobic gymnastic exercise on stress, fatigue, and sleep quality during postpartum

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Doing the monthth is Taiwan-specific socio-cultural system, women usually decrease their exercising during their postpartum periods. A growing body of evidence suggests that exercise is important contributor to maternal health and thus is beneficial to infants. Gymnastics is a preferable safe exercise for postnatal women performing regularly. To determine the effectiveness of aerobic gymnastic exercise in health promotion during postpartum, a total of 140 postnatal women without contraindications were systematically assigned, with a random start to experimental (n=70) or a control (n=70) group. Participants in the gymnastic exercise group were instructed to engage in aerobic gymnastic exercise at least 3 times (15 minutes per section) a week in addition to receiving general postnatal care similar to that in the control group for 3 months. Outcome measures include Perceived Stress Scale, Postpartum Fatigue Scale, Postpartum Sleep Quality Scale, and Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale. Sixty-four women in experimental and 65 in control group completed the 4-week post-tests; 60 in the experimental group and 62 in control group completed the 12-week post-tests. Paired t-tests revealed that aerobic gymnastic exercise participants had improved significantly in perceived stress and fatigue after 4 weeks gymnastic exercise; these positive effects extended to the 12-week posttests. In addition, the physical symptoms-related sleep inefficiency of participants showed significant improvements in the aerobic gymnastic exercise group than in the control group at the 12-week posttest. The results contribute to the further study of exercises and compact disc multimedia health education programs for postnatal women.

Biography

Chung-Hey Chen completed her PhD from University of Pittsburgh, USA in 1994. Her research has focused for the past 35 years on perinatal depression, stressfulness of childbearing and complementary/alternative therapy. She has published more than 140 articles in the field of health care. Her research findings not only contribute to the clinical practice in terms of establishing the women health care model in Taiwan, but also motivating the graduate students to extend her research focus on women health, nursing education and illness management. She has been serving as a section editor of *repute*.

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