PT2-4 Assessing the quality of study reports on spa therapy based on randomized controlled trials by the spa therapy checklist (SPAC)

Hiroharu KAMIOKA1), Kiichiro TSUTANI2), Masaharu MAEDA3), Shinya HAYASAKA4), Yasuaki GOTO5)

1) Faculty of Regional Environment Science, Tokyo University of Agriculture
2) Department of Drug Policy and Management, Graduate School of Pharmaceutical Sciences, The University of Tokyo
3) Department of Rehabilitation, International University of Health and Welfare Graduate School
4) Department of Health Science, Daito Bunka University
5) Japan Health and Research Institute

Objectives: To assess the quality of study reports on spa therapy based on randomized controlled trials by the spa therapy and balneotherapy checklist (SPAC), and to show the relationship between SPAC score and the characteristics of publication.

Methods: We searched the following databases from 1990 up to September 30, 2013: MEDLINE via PubMed, CINAHL, Web of Science, Ichushi Web, Global Health Library, the Western Pacific Region Index Medicus, Psyc INFO, and the Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews. We used the SPAC to assess the quality of reports on spa therapy and balneotherapy trials (SPAC) that was developed using the Delphi consensus method.

Results: Fifty-one studies met all inclusion criteria. Forty studies (78%) were about “Diseases of the musculoskeletal system and connective”. The total SPAC score (full-mark: 19pts) was 10.8±2.3pts (mean±SD). The items for which a description was lacking (very poor; <50%) in many studies were as follows: “locations of spa facility where the data were collected”; “pH”; “scale of bathtub”; “presence of other facility and exposure than bathing (sauna, steam bath, etc.)”; “qualification and experience of care provider”; “Instructions about daily life” and “adherence”. We clarified that there was no relationship between the publish period, languages, and the impact factor (IF) for the SPAC score.

Conclusion: In order to prevent flawed description, SPAC could provide indispensable information for researchers who are going to design a research protocol according to each disease.

Keywords: Spa therapy, Randomized controlled trials, Curative effect