

Treatment of psoriatic arthritis at the Dead Sea.

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OBJECTIVE. To evaluate the effectiveness of balneotherapy (mud packs and sulfur baths) on patients with psoriasis and psoriatic arthritis (PsA). **METHODS.** One hundred and sixty-six patients with psoriasis and PsA were treated at the Dead Sea for a period of 3 weeks. The patients were divided into 2 groups. Both groups had the regular regimen of bathing in Dead Sea water and exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays. The study group, which consisted of 146 patients also was treated with mud packs and sulfur baths. The control group, which had no additional therapy, consisted of 20 patients. The main clinical variables assessed were duration of morning stiffness, grip strength, activities of daily living, subjective patient assessment of disease severity, number of active joints, number of effluent joints. Ritchie index, psoriasis area and severity index score, cervical, thoracic, and lumbar spine pain and limitations of movement. **RESULTS.** Statistically significant improvement was found in most variables in both groups. However, better results were observed in the study group. In 2 variables, reduction of spinal pain and range of movement in the lumbar spine, significant improvement ($p = 0.001$ and $p = 0.022$, respectively) was observed in the study group only. **CONCLUSION.** Treatment of psoriasis and PsA at the Dead Sea area is very efficacious and the addition of balneotherapy can have additional beneficial effects on patients with PsA. Other controlled studies with longer followup periods are needed to verify our results.

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