Psicología y Educación: Presente y Futuro

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ACIPE- Asociación Científica de Psicología y Educación
Nuevas herramientas para promover el bienestar en la escuela:
Shiatsu aplicado a los docentes con el estrés.

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Introducción: Numerosos estudios muestran la presencia de trastornos psicosomáticos debidos al estrés y síntomas de agotamiento en los profesores. El estrés puede ser considerado un síndrome multidimensional que afecta a todo el cuerpo. Se requieren intervenciones específicas que tengan en cuenta a la persona como un todo y que se actúan, al mismo tiempo, a diferentes niveles (físico, psicológico, emocional). El Shiatsu es una técnica de trabajo corporal basado en la presión (hecha con las palmas, pulgares, codos) que, hecha a lo largo de la ruta del MCT (la Medicina China Tradicional), en los puntos reflejos del cuerpo, permite de disolver bloqueos psicosomática y recuperar la capacidad del cuerpo para reaccionar a factores de estrés. Objetivos: El estudio tiene como objetivo verificar la eficacia del Shiatsu en la prevención y/o reducción de los niveles de estrés de los profesores. Método: Una muestra de 30 profesores de enseñanza secundaria de la provincia de Messina ha estado sujeto a 8 tratamientos de 40 minutos cada uno de Shiatsu estándar para el estrés. Los métodos implican la administración de cuestionarios para evaluar el estrés (MPS), ansiedad (STAY-Y1-Y2) al inicio y en conclusión. Resultados: El trabajo está todavía en curso pero se observa una tendencia de reducción de estrés y de ansiedad. Conclusiones: A partir de estos resultados parciales se puede afirmar que el Shiatsu es una técnica eficaz para reducir el estrés, evitar el agotamiento de los docentes y favorecer la mejora de la calidad de vida. Palabras clave: Estrés; profesores; shiatsu; bienestar
New tools to promote well-being in the school
Shiatsu techniques applied to teacher stress
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Introduction: Numerous studies have demonstrated the presence of psychosomatic disorders due to stress and symptoms of burnout among teachers. Stress can be considered a multidimensional syndrome affecting the entire body which requires specific interventions while considering the person as a whole and acting simultaneously on his/her entire body at different levels (physical, psychological, emotional). Shiatsu is a technique of bodywork based on pressure (flow with palms, thumbs, elbows) that is carried out along the MTC (Traditional Chinese Medicine) route, on reflex points of the body, which alleviates psychosomatic blockages and recuperates the body’s ability to react to stress factors. Objectives: This study aims to verify the effectiveness of Shiatsu to prevent and/or reduce the stress levels of secondary school teachers. Method: A sample of 30 secondary school teachers in the province of Messina has been subject to 8 treatments of 40 minutes each of standard Shiatsu treatment for stress. The methods involve the administration of questionnaires to assess stress (MPS), anxiety (S.T.A.I.Y1-Y2), at the beginning and at the end. Results: Despite being a work in progress, this study shows that there is a reduction of stress and anxiety. Conclusions: In conclusion these initial findings show that Shiatsu can be considered an effective technique to reduce stress and prevent teachers’ burnout while improving their quality of life.

Key words: stress; teachers; shiatsu; well-being.

1. Introduction

The 2004 European Framework Agreement on Health and Safety at Work defines stress as “a condition that may be accompanied by physical, psychological, social disorders or dysfunctions, and is a consequence of the fact that some individuals do not feel able to respond to the requests or the expectations placed on them”. In Italy we have adopted/transposed some of the European guidelines, and by Law Decree No. 81 of 2008 an obligation on the employer to evaluate and manage work stress levels has been introduced. The Italian schools come within the scope of that law (D. l. 81/2008 art. 3) and the Headmaster is required to assess and manage the new risks of work-related stress. (DL No. 81 Article 28).

Moreover, the burnout of teachers and, more generally, that of the so-called helping professions is an issue that has been discussed for at least thirty years on an international level, as it is clearly shown in studies meta-analytic studies were also conducted: among the published contributions we can mention, for example, those made by Lee (1996). This latter contribution is based on 40 studies including eight made specifically on teachers. Among the professions that involve a helping relationship, the teacher is one of the categories most at risk of stress (Taylor, 2005).

The professional category of teachers is, however, among the so-called helping profession and proves to be more exposed to psychophysical strain (Lodolo D’Oria, 2010).

Of course, the stress response is strictly individual; from the point of view of organisational management it is possible to control some signals that can assume the presence of risks: high rate of absenteeism, turnover, high mobility obviously not due to objective reasons (such as job precariousness); conflicts between operators, with students,
with families; low quality performance. Among the subjective symptoms that may be of interest to individuals and whose origin or contributing factor can be found in the work environment, we can enumerate a large class of more or less serious diseases. Naturally, their relationship with work environment must be seen in combination with other contextual observations. In literature there is scientific evidence about the symptoms that commonly arise in teacher category attributable to work-related stress (VIZZI s., 2002; Bauer, 2006; BETORET, 2006). The results of these studies show that the teacher category - in contrast with the widespread stereotypes in public opinion - is subject to a frequency of psychiatric disorders twice as big as that of the category of employees, two and a half times that of health workers and three times that of manual workers (according to DSM IV mood disorders respectively 39%, 32% anxiety disorders, personality disorders, 12%, 11% schizophrenia and other psychotic disorders, 6% more) (Lodolo d’Oria, 2004). Additional elements to substantiate the risk of mental and physical wear and tear in the teaching staff have been identified in the study published in Medicina del Lavoro n°3/09. The study also highlights how teachers present the risk of developing a tumor 1.5-2 times higher than manual workers and employees, suggesting that this is due to immunosuppression due to mental and physical exhaustion.

The definition that we now read art. 2, paragraph 1, lett. o) of the Legislative Decree. n. 81/2008 identifies health as a “complete physical, mental and social wellness state, not just the absence of disease or infirmity” (Nunin, 2012), in line with the well-known definition that is read in Preamble of World Health Organization (WHO). This definition marks an important juridical turning point: we must ensure that the employees, in this case the teachers, have the organizational climate and the right tools not only to prevent the discomfort, but also to stimulate and promote conditions of well-being (Pilgrim, 2010) When considering the planned and adopted interventions for the prevention and resolution of the teacher stress, it is clear that holistic approaches to the person have been neglected, where the “stress management” rather concerns the whole person, his/her general conditions which are not only cognitive or emotional but are related to the organism as a whole. There are involved cortical areas, limbic areas (linked to the emotional), various systems such as the autonomic and neuroendocrine, respiratory system (one of the most ‘important systems of regulation); and more peripheral systems such as the sensory and perceptive, as well as the system of postures, movements, muscle tension in their repetitive and chronic mode. We are in the area of / we deal with Complexity. It is therefore important to consider all these plans as an integrated whole (Luciano Rispoli, Di Nuovo S..2011).

The Shiatsu, which literally means pressure (Shi) with fingers (atsu), is ‘a discipline that has its roots in traditional Chinese medicine and oriental forms of manipulation as the am-ma the tu-ina etc. Later it diversified from these developing its own path with typical features: it is characterized mainly by the static pressure of the flow that enters perpendicularly the area of the body being treated. In Shiatsu there is therefore no friction, kneading, spinal adjustments, etc.. Shiatsu is a working technique based on flow pressure with thumbs, palms, elbows. The pressures with these features produce a stimulus to which the organism “responds” recovering and expressing from inside its vital resources. (Parolin, 2001)

In its dimension of mutual encounter and exchange, Shiatsu generates a process of building conditions for greater prosperity, greater vitality, to achieve a balance that allows the person receiving the treatment to better respond to emotional stress. And it is this state of increased vitality that puts the person treated in the necessary conditions to respond to aggression or to recover from the disharmonies that underlie the disease and allow its onset and development (Parolin, 2001). Shiatsu stimulates the self-healing capacity of the body and therefore has global effects on the person: on the whole body (not just on the symptoms) and at different levels (physical, emotional, relational, spiritual, etc.) whatever is the condition of the initial discomfort.

A lot of psychosomatic diseases, for example, arise from stress or from not being able to make an evolutionary
step in one’s life; with shiatsu you can get a quick re-tuning, and the realization that many times makes you able to “get back to enjoy life” rapidly (Amico, 2008).

In general, the scientific literature has examined interventions for stress management focused on the person considering the cognitive-behavioral therapy, counseling, various relaxation techniques; this is primarily a work on cognition or emotional, lacking the testing of innovative strategies that work on the individual seen as “self-organized complex system.” In particular, the principles of Shiatsu discipline derive from this new concept of health and wellness; State of the art, there are few studies on the subject: “The Effects of Shiatsu Massage on Stressed College Students at the ‘Eastern Kentucky University (Daniel, 2014) and “New Support approaches to reduction of burnout”: _ UOC presso Medical Oncology and Hospice of the University Hospital of Messina (Aragona, Arena, Amico, Bonforte, Torre 2005); this experimental study is to demonstrate the validity of the application of the discipline of shiatsu in the prevention and treatment of stress in teachers from state secondary school of first and second degree.

If proven, it is believed that we can apply this type of intervention with the working institutions, particularly in schools, to achieve the goals of health and safety related to stress in an effective perspective cost / benefit as by satisfying the expectations of improvement of the employees their profile and enthusiasm increases; in addition, on a larger scale and long term, it allows a substantial reduction in public health spending (Jacob, Geraci, Monica, 2014) and the school (work performance improvement, decrease in absenteeism, better student achievement) by increasing the performance of the school system....

The objective of this research is to examine the effects that the discipline Shiatsu can have on the teacher’s well being. In particular, the main hypothesis of the study aims to verify whether, following administration of a cycle of standardized shiatsu treatments, it is possible to experience a significant improvement in the level of stress, anxiety and general health teacher.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

Participation in the research was voluntary after signing an informed consent, which guaranteed the processing of personal data in compliance with privacy law (D.lgs 196/2003). teachers to the role of secondary state school of first and second degree.

After the assessment phase, the teachers have been subjected to 8 Shiatsu treatments, lasting 40 ‘each, twice a week, carried out by three Shiatsu practitioners professionals with over ten years experience, graduated from the ‘Italian Academy Shiatsu- do “in Milan. Since no literature codified forms of shiatsu treatments for this purpose (stress reduction), the researcher has developed a sequence (Kata) which refers to M.T.C. and the Master Masunaga, aimed at stimulation and reactivation of the vital resources of the person, and that according to the results will eventually be the subject of standardization study for the purpose of further research; After 8 treatments provided there was the post-test.

2.2. Materials

For the evaluation during the assessment phase and post-treatments are used the following tools, for each of which a brief description is provided:

- State- Trait Anxiety Inventory form Y is a self-assessment questionnaire in Likert scale form, where evaluation is on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = not at all and 4 = very) with different statements about your behavior. La STAI consists of
a total of 40 items, 20 concern the status anxiety (Y1) and 20 trait anxiety (Y2).

Anxiety status indicates how the person perceives anxiety “at that moment.”

The trait anxiety refers to how the person feels habitually, to a more ‘durable and stable condition of the personality that characterizes the individual on an ongoing basis, independently of a particular situation.

- The questionnaire M.S.P. (Lemyre, Tessier and Fillion, 1990) consists of 49 items based on different aspects related to the perception that the individual has of his state (Cognitive-affective, physiological, behavioral). These three main categories are considered by the authors are able to provide a global index of the state of psychological stress, it understood as a general and overall system response, rather than as a specific way of coping in front of equally specific situations.

2.3. Procedure

Assessment

Tests sent to teachers by mail were completed and returned by hand or by mail.

Shiatsu treatments

Each teacher is practiced eight Shiatsu treatments every two weeks; each 40’ duration.

The person is on the tatami in the prone position, then on the side and finally in the supine position. The operator operates the pressure, according to the peculiar characteristics of shiatsu (perpendicularity, perseverance, support), by inch stacked on each part of the body treated, especially on the abdominal, lumbar and sacral area and on specific meridians: Urinary Bladder (VU), Rene (R), gall bladder (VB), liver (F), Heart (C), Triple Burner (TR), Large intestine (GI), lung (P). At the end of each treatment, the teacher makes a qualitative subjective evaluation on the treatment received.

At the end, after three days, they were repeated the assessment tests and was asked the teacher to evaluate about perceived changes.

3. Results

Subjective analysis of Shiatsu operators and comments of the participants is that the teachers are very satisfied with the treatments received and recorded a subjective general welfare: calm, relaxation and energy. More self-awareness of the body and emotions.

Objective analysis of the data shows the following results:

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Min.</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Standard dev</th>
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<td>137,00</td>
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</tr>
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<td>67,00</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>49,00</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

The following table describes the results of three tests administered to participants before and after the shiatsu
treatment cycle; in particular, by M.S.P. you can detect a reduction of half of the level of stress, and even by STAI Y1 e STAI Y2 (anxiety state and trait) tests there is a significant reduction of anxiety state though lower. It is also noted, that the standard deviation after the treatments is lower and then detects a more uniform variability of the results both as regards the stress that for the anxiety condition (both state and trait).

4. Discussion

Analyzing M.S.P. you can observe an overall reduction in stress levels (p < 0.001). Also analyzing S.T.A.I Y1 and Y2 S.T.A.I tests about the status anxiety and trait you can observe a significant improvement even if less than the M.S.P test. Actually data analysis is partial because the research is in progress. Qualitative analysis of final comments, reported an inner change that has affected personal relationships with the working environment, and the interaction with the students noting with surprise positive changes in the behavior of the latter. All teachers have expressed the desire to continue the treatments because they had drawn a clear subjective benefit. These positive effects have definitely had an impact on the quality of the work performed (data not evaluated), in the quality, effectiveness of communication and job satisfaction of teachers.

In general, these results support the experimental hypothesis that shiatsu is an effective technique for the treatment of stress and anxiety, in particular that relating to a particular professional category as that of the teachers.

5. Conclusions

The data, although partial, indicate a significant positive trend that leads us to consider Shiatsu an effective methodology to prevent and manage mental and physical illness and improve the quality of the teacher’s life and to increase the well-being in the school environment (relationship with students, between teachers, with the headmaster).

This study opens up new fields of exploration for future research in this area: for example the application of Shiatsu to reduce your stress levels can affect the quality of education, educational relations, such as reduction sick leave or absences in general, resulting in lower costs to the state administration load and / or school.
Reference


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