

Letter to the Editor / Editöre Mektup

The Effect of Back Massage Applied to Palliative Care Patients on Sleep Quality and Pain  
Palyatif Bakım Hastalarına Uygulanan Sırt Masajının Uyku Kalitesi ve Ağrıya Etkisi

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**Abstract:** In this article, I would like to share my opinions about the article titled 'The Effect of Back Massage Applied to Palliative Care Patients on Sleep Quality and Pain'. In the current article, Durmaz et al. determined that there was a statistically significant increase in the patients' sleep quality and a significant decrease in their pain levels, starting from the 4th day of applying back massage to palliative care patients for 7 days. Pain may occur in patients in palliative care centers due to various reasons. In this article, I will try to contribute to the article from the perspective of a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician.

**Keywords:** Pain, Physiotherapy, Exercise

**Özet:** Bu yazımda 'Palyatif Bakım Hastalarına Uygulanan Sırt Masajının Uyku Kalitesi ve Ağrı Üzerine Etkisi' başlıklı yazı hakkındaki görüşlerimi paylaşmak istiyorum. Bu makalede Durmaz ve ark.'ları palyatif bakım hastalarına 7 gün süreyle sırt masajı uygulanmasının 4. gününden itibaren hastaların uyku kalitesinde istatistiksel olarak anlamlı bir artış ve ağrı düzeylerinde anlamlı bir azalma olduğunu belirlemiştir. Palyatif bakım merkezlerindeki hastalarda çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı ağrı ortaya çıkabilmektedir. Bu yazımda bir fiziksel tıp ve rehabilitasyon hekimi bakış açısıyla yazıya katkı sağlamaya çalışacağım.

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## 1. To the editor

In this article, I would like to share my opinions about the article titled 'The Effect of Back Massage Applied to Palliative Care Patients on Sleep Quality and Pain' (1). In the current article, Durmaz et al. determined that there was a statistically significant increase in the patients' sleep quality and a significant decrease in their pain levels, starting from the 4th day of applying back massage to palliative care patients for 7 days (1). Pain may occur in patients in palliative care centers due to various reasons. In this article, I will try to contribute to the article from the perspective of a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician.

Palliative care units are predominantly based on the traditional hospice-like model for patients with short life expectancy. Many care services, especially pain relief, are provided in these units (2). Especially end-stage malignancy patients constitute an important part of palliative care centers. Palliative rehabilitation has an important role in the treatment of people with advanced cancer by helping to improve quality of life and relieve pain, symptoms and distress. Rehabilitation and palliative care services should be considered as inseparable elements (3). Patients in need of palliative care experience a high rate of difficult-to-control symptoms such as pain, fatigue, anxiety and depression (4). From this perspective, symptoms, especially pain, need to be controlled in order to increase the quality of life of patients in palliative care centers. Durmaz et al. determined the positive effects of back massage applied to palliative care patients on sleep quality and pain (1). But it is clear that

massage alone is not enough to reduce pain. In addition, we can say that combining exercise and physiotherapy practices will be more effective. In reviews of palliative rehabilitation, there is a growing body of evidence that exercise and rehabilitation practices improve patients' quality of life and symptoms such as pain and anxiety (5). In a study, the effect of the physiotherapy program applied to palliative care patients on the patients' functional independence and quality of life was examined. As a result of the study, it was determined that the quality of life in the physiotherapy group was better than standard care group. In addition, in the same study, it was determined that physiotherapy group experienced less pain and fatigue (6). In a retrospective study by Montagnini et al. investigating the use of physical therapy in the palliative care unit, it was determined that physical therapy practices were not common in the palliative care unit. Apart from this, it was determined that 56% of the patients who received physical therapy benefited (7).

Durmaz et al.'s study makes a significant contribution to the literature in terms of showing the effect of back massage applied to palliative care patients (1). As stated in the literature, the quality of life of palliative care patients is negatively affected and symptoms such as pain and fatigue are observed. If we look at the current study from this perspective, it is clear that physical therapy methods applied to patients in addition to massage can reduce the patient's pain and increase the quality of life. Therefore, I think that physical therapy practices should be included in future studies.

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**Ethics**

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