

Tai chi qigong is good for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Editorial

Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) is a slow progressive disease characterized by chronic lung airflow limitations. COPD sufferers usually present the symptoms of coughing, wheezing, sputum production, and breathlessness. It is an under-diagnosed, life-threatening lung disease that interferes with normal breathing and is not fully reversible. Incidences of COPD, currently the fourth leading cause of death, continue to increase worldwide. In terms of morbidity, COPD ranks thirteenth. WHO estimates the disease will become the fifth commonest disease and the third killer globally by 2030.¹

Smoking is the major risk factor of COPD. Nearly 90% of COPD cases are related to smoking or exposure to passive cigarette smoke.² People with COPD may experience a decline in their physical ability, which in turn influences their quality of life. In addition, these physical and psychosocial limitations can increase their need for support from family and friends. COPD not only induces great distress to the patient, it also incurs a heavy burden to the social resources.

Because of the burden of COPD to clients and the society, measures to minimize suffering need to be implemented. Existing medications are mainly used to decrease symptoms, rather than to modify lung functions and improve psychosocial functions. Ideally, clients need to develop skills in disease management in order to improve their health and functional status. COPD clients need to be physically active to reduce the impact of the lung damage, as well as to maintain fitness and reduce disability.

Tai chi qigong, a traditional Chinese health-promoting exercise, is believed to be beneficial to the respiratory system. During practice, tai chi displays a better training effect because of its higher intensity, whereas qigong enhances breathing efficiency.

Qigong is an ancient Chinese system of gentle self-healing exercises that include healing postures, movements, sounds, breathing techniques, and meditation. It originated in China and has a history of more than 5000 years. The practice of Qigong is designed to cultivate functional integrity and enhance the life vital energy called *Qi*. All the traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practice is based on the concept of *Qi*. Tai chi is a martial art that originated in China in the 13th century. It can be viewed as a therapeutic exercise based on Chinese medicine. Tai chi practice also involves the recognition, development, and use of *Qi*.

Tai chi qigong could be beneficial for tertiary prevention of clients with COPD. Studies have demonstrated significant effect of tai chi qigong in improving physiological and psychosocial well-being in clients with COPD.^{3,4} Tai chi qigong improved lung functions, increased exercise capacity, improve health related quality of life, and increased perceived social support network in clients with COPD. Tai chi

Volume 3 Issue 2 - 2016

Aileen Chan WK

The Nethersole School of Nursing, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, China

Correspondence: Aileen Chan WK, The Nethersole School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, Esther Lee Building, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shatin, N.T. Hong Kong, China, Tel (852) 31634290, Fax (852) 26035269, Email aileenchan@cuhk.edu.hk

Received: January 06, 2016 | **Published:** February 05, 2016

qigong can be recommended as an adjunctive intervention to standard medical treatment. In addition, tai chi qigong is a safe and feasible intervention that causes no harm to the clients. It promotes clients' self-efficacy for disease management and self-care. Integrating TCQ into clients' daily activity provides a good opportunity for them to actively and independently participate in their own care.

In summary, the primary treatment for COPD is to stop smoking, avoid the air hazy place. Follow doctor's instructions on medication, regular exercise helps to maintain cardio respiratory function, Practice tai chi qigong every day is particularly appropriate for COPD patients because the movements are gentle and easy to learn. Furthermore, it does not need any equipment and can be practiced indoors or outdoors at any time.

Acknowledgments

None.

Conflicts of interest

Author declares there are no conflicts of interest.

Funding

None.

References

1. World Health Organization. Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). 2012.
2. Hong Kong Lung Foundation. COPD Hong Kong (GOLD). 2010.
3. Aileen WKC, Albert L, Diana TFL, et al. Evaluation of the sustaining effects of tai chi qigong in the sixth month in promoting psychosocial health in copd patients: A single-blind, randomized controlled trial. *The Scientific World Journal*. 2013;2013:11.
4. Chan AW, Lee A, Lee DT, et al. The sustaining effects of tai chi qigong on physiological health for COPD patients: a randomized controlled trial. *Complement Ther Med*. 2013;21(6):585-594.