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Low frequency pulsed electromagnetic field--a viable alternative therapy for arthritis.

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Abstract

Arthritis refers to more than 100 disorders of the musculoskeletal system. The existing pharmacological interventions for arthritis offer only symptomatic relief and they are not definitive and curative. Magnetic healing has been known from antiquity and it is evolved to the present times with the advent of electromagnetism. The original basis for the trial of this form of therapy is the interaction between the biological systems with the natural magnetic fields. Optimization of the physical window comprising the electromagnetic field generator and signal properties (frequency, intensity, duration, waveform) with the biological window, inclusive of the experimental model, age and stimulus has helped in achieving consistent beneficial results. Low frequency pulsed electromagnetic field (PEMF) can provide noninvasive, safe and easy to apply method to treat pain, inflammation and dysfunctions associated with rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and osteoarthritis (OA) and PEMF has a long term record of safety. This review focusses on the therapeutic application of PEMF in the treatment of these forms of arthritis. The analysis of various studies (animal models of arthritis, cell culture systems and clinical trials) reporting the use of PEMF for arthritis cure has conclusively shown that PEMF not only alleviates the pain in the arthritis condition but it also affords chondroprotection, exerts antiinflammatory action and helps in bone remodeling and this could be developed as a viable alternative for arthritis therapy.

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