

A Randomized Controlled Trial of Meditation and Massage for Patients with AIDS at the End of Life

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Epidemiology of AIDS

- ❖ 6th leading cause of death in U.S. (18-45 y).
- ❖ Disproportionately afflicts People of Color.
- ❖ Remains an ultimately terminal condition.
- ❖ Compounded by social stigma and alienation.

Palliative care in the United States

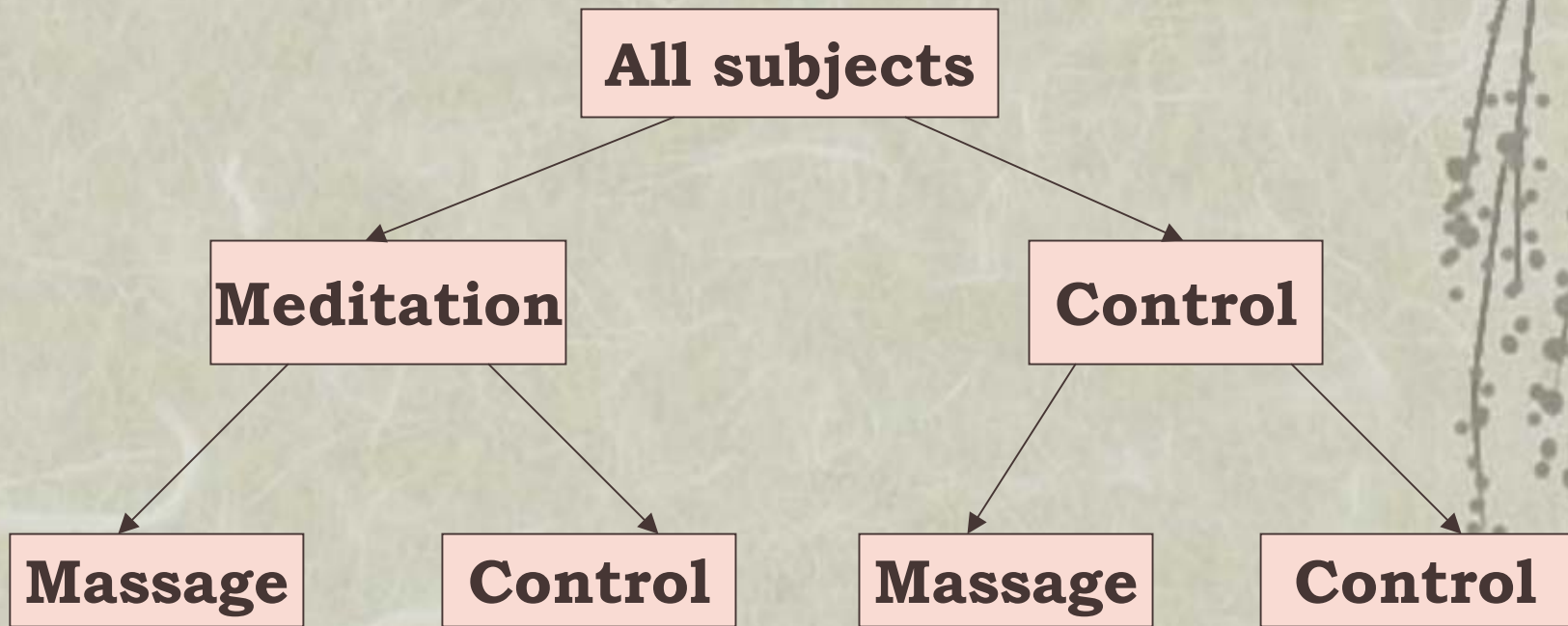
- ❖ Expand measurement beyond simple mortality to Quality of Life.
- ❖ Focus on medical, social, and emotional needs of patients.
- ❖ Limited attention to date on spiritual care.

Hypotheses

- ❖ Patients with AIDS at the end-of-life receiving a meditation intervention will have higher quality of life scores, as compared to control.
- ❖ Patients receiving a massage intervention will have higher quality of life scores as compared to controls.
- ❖ Patients receiving a combined meditation and massage intervention will have higher quality of life scores compared to patients receiving either intervention independently.

Study Design

Random assignments to 2 x 2 factorial



Community-academic partnership

- ❖ Yale Prevention Research Center
- ❖ Leeway, Inc.
- ❖ Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- ❖ Yale School of Nursing

Setting

- ❖ Leeway, Inc., New Haven, CT
- ❖ AIDS dedicated skilled nursing facility
- ❖ 40 beds

Recruitment

- ❖ N=60
- ❖ 22 enrolled
- ❖ 100% participation of eligible residents
- ❖ Leeway staff nurse

Subjects

Inclusion Criteria

- ❖ >18 years
 - ❖ Leeway resident > 1 m
 - ❖ life expectancy > 2 m
 - ❖ diagnosis of AIDS
- + one of the following:
- ❖ T-cell count <200
 - ❖ viral load >100,000
 - ❖ Serious co-morbid diagnosis
 - ❖ AIDS-defining illness

Subjects

Exclusion Criteria

- ❖ Mini-Mental Status Exam < 23
- ❖ current diagnosis of psychosis or uncontrolled psychiatric condition
- ❖ inability to understand English

Description of Metta

- ❖ 2,500 year old practice.
- ❖ Spiritual but non-denominational.
- ❖ Aims to surmount barriers to love, compassion, and equanimity.
- ❖ Cultivates loving-kindness and forgiveness toward oneself and all living beings.

Intervention - meditation

- ❖ 90-minute introductory class on metta meditation.
- ❖ Personal cassette player and audio cassette of guided metta meditation.
- ❖ Instruction to listen to the tape at least qd.

Intervention - massage

- ❖ 30-minute massage 5 days/week throughout the 4-week intervention period.
- ❖ Licensed massage therapists.
- ❖ Patients choose type of massage.

Control - standard care

- ❖ Multidisciplinary healthcare team
- ❖ Care plan reviewed at least q 90 days
- ❖ Substance abuse treatment program
- ❖ Mental health services
- ❖ Buddy program
- ❖ Reflexology therapy
- ❖ Men's and women's groups
- ❖ Religious services/chaplain
- ❖ Recreation therapy

Outcome Assessment

Missoula Vitas Quality of Life Index

- ❖ 15-item validated end-of-life instrument
- ❖ 5 dimensions of quality of life:
 - transcendent or spiritual
 - well-being
 - symptoms
 - interpersonal relationships
 - function

Assessment schedule

- ❖ Baseline
- ❖ Intervention period
 - week 2
 - week 4
- ❖ Post intervention
 - week 8
 - week 12
- ❖ q 3 months

Preliminary Results

demographics n=22

Variable	Total (%)
Age range	31-59 years
Age mean	45.8 years
Males	12 (54.5%)
Females	10 (45.5%)
Race/Ethnicity	
● African-American	● 15 (68%)
● Hispanic	● 2 (9%)
● White	● 4 (18%)

Preliminary Results

Mean Change in Transcendent Scores from Baseline to Week 8

*significant $p < 0.05$

Treatment group	Mean change transcendent score	SD	t-value	p-value
*standard	-17.00	3.16	-10.75	0.0017
metta meditation	-10.40	14.60	-1.59	0.1865
therapeutic massage	-1.00	2.24	-1.00	0.3739
Combined Treatment	2.80	8.53	0.73	0.5035

Preliminary Results

Difference in Mean Transcendent Scores at Week 8 Between Groups

* $p < 0.05$

Group	Between Group Difference in Means	t-value	p-value
standard vs meditation	5.89	1.09	0.2933
*standard vs massage	17.18	3.17	0.0068
*standard vs combined	14.57	2.46	0.0275

Value of community-academic partnership

- ❖ Mutual respect.
- ❖ Complementary skills.
- ❖ Study tailored to population and setting.
- ❖ Balances ethical concerns and methodologic rigor.

Acknowledgments

- ❖ National Institute of Nursing Research
- ❖ Leeway residents and staff