Can qigong reduce cocaine cravings in early addiction recovery?

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Cocaine is one of the most addictive drugs of abuse. Few effective treatments are available to help control cravings and withdrawal symptoms among individuals undergoing therapy to overcome cocaine abuse. Promising results from a study of qigong therapy are published in

The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine.

Individuals undergoing residential substance abuse treatment who received qigong therapy, compared to a similar duration of sham treatment, reported significantly reduced cravings for cocaine in response to viewing and handling items related to cocaine use. The qigong treatment group were also significantly less likely to have symptoms of depression than the sham treatment group.

In the article "A Pilot Study of Qigong for Reducing Cocaine Craving Early in Recovery," David Smelson, PsyD, David Eisenberg, MD, and coauthors demonstrate the feasibility of delivering external qigong therapy (EQT) to a population of recently abstinent cocaine-dependent individuals. In EQT, a trained qigong practitioner using focused intention directs and unblocks bioenergy (qi) to help an individual achieve balance that facilitates healing and equilibration in withdrawal.

"This early work may have profound consequences in drug rehabilitation programs, and certainly deserves further focused and rigorous evaluation," says Editor-in-Chief Kim A. Jobst, MA, DM, Functional Shift Consulting Ltd., Hereford, U.K.

More information: The article is available free on the Journal website at http://www.liebertpub.com/acm.

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