

Light therapy seems promising for nonspecific back pain

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(HealthDay)—For adults with chronic nonspecific back pain (CNBP), light therapy is associated with reduction in pain intensity and improvement in depressive symptoms, according to a study published in the December issue of *Pain Medicine*.

Veronika Leichtfried, Ph.D., from the Institute for Sports Medicine in Hall in Tyrol, Austria, and colleagues examined incorporation of [light therapy](#) in the treatment of CNBP. One hundred twenty-five patients reporting pain intensity of ≥ 3 points on item 5 of the Brief Pain Inventory were included in a randomized, controlled study. Over three weeks, participants received three and zero supplementary light exposures in the active treatment group (36 patients) and sham treatment group (36 patients), respectively; the [control group](#) (33 patients) received usual care.

The researchers found that, compared with the control group, the changes in pain intensity were higher in the bright light group (effect size, $D = 0.46$). The intervention group also had higher changes in depression score compared with controls (effect size, $D = 0.86$). For the intervention versus sham group, there were no differences in the change scores.

"Light therapy even in low [doses] could improve [depressive symptoms](#) and reduce [pain intensity](#) in CNBP patients," the authors write. "Further research is needed for optimizing parameters of frequency, dose, and duration of therapeutic light exposure."

One author is the owner of the light device used in this trial; the study was funded by the lighting-network K-Licht.

More information: [Abstract](#)
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