High-frequency whole-body vibration improves balancing ability in elderly women.

Abstract

Objective
To investigate the efficacy of high-frequency whole-body vibration (WBV) on balancing ability in elderly women.

Design
Randomized controlled trial. Subjects were randomized to either the WBV intervention or the no-treatment control group.
Community-living elderly women.

Participants
Sixty-nine elderly women aged 60 or above without habitual exercise.

Intervention
Side alternating WBV at 20Hz with 3 minutes a day and 3 days a week for 3 months in the WBV intervention group. Those in control group remained sedentary with normal daily life for the whole study period.

Main Outcome Measures
Limits of stability in terms of reaction time, movement velocity, directional control, endpoint excursion, maximum excursion, and the functional reach test were performed at baseline and endpoint.

Results
Significant enhancement of stability was detected in movement velocity (\(P<.01\)), maximum point excursion (\(P<.01\)), in directional control (\(P<.05\)).

Conclusions
WBV was effective in improving the balancing ability in elderly women. This also provides evidence to support our user-friendly WBV treatment protocol of 3 minutes a day for the elderly to maintain their balancing ability and reduce risks of fall.

Key Words
Accidental falls; Balance; Frail elderly; Posture; Randomized controlled trials; Rehabilitation; Vibration
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