Use of spa therapy to improve the quality of life of chronic low back pain patients.

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OBJECTIVES: This study assessed the effectiveness of adding spa therapy to usual drug treatment in chronic low back pain patients. METHODS: A total of 224 patients were assigned randomly to either a treatment (n=128) or a control (n=96) group. Subjects in both groups received usual drug therapy. Those in the treatment group also underwent spa therapy in Vittel, France, for 6 days a week for 3 consecutive weeks. Effectiveness was assessed using a quality-of-life scale (the Duke Health Profile), clinical measures, and the Roland and Morris disability questionnaire. Groups were compared using an analysis of variance with repeated measures. RESULTS: At both 3 weeks and 3 months, patients in the treatment group exhibited significant improvement in measures of: physical and mental dimensions of quality of life, anxiety, depression, pain duration, pain intensity, and functional disability. CONCLUSION: This study suggests that spa therapy is an effective treatment for chronic low back pain patients.

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