

**P71**

**A pilot trial of compression gloves in early inflammatory and rheumatoid arthritis**

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**Background:** Compression gloves are provided in rheumatoid arthritis (RA) to improve hand symptoms and function but there is little evidence for their effectiveness. As a group of Rheumatology Occupational Therapists we were unaware of clinical evidence to support use of gloves. Financial constraints lead to the need to justify effective use of resources. No recent quality studies of compression gloves in arthritis were available a feasibility study to support anecdotal evidence was required. The study aim was to evaluate gloves' effects on hand symptoms and function.

**Methods:** Members of the northwest COTSSR met to agree best clinical practice. Service users were involved. A systematic review of compression gloves trials undertaken all Studies were small and poor methodology. The last study undertaken was 21 years ago. The group agreed compression glove criteria, hand assessment, treatment protocols and patient information leaflet. Prior to recruitment the OTs attended a training day to standardize assessments and study procedures. A pre-post-test study was conducted. Participants wore Isotoner ¾ finger gloves. Hand assessments were completed at 0 and 4 weeks.

**Results:** Outcomes demonstrated significant improvements in: pain, stiffness, swelling, finger flexion and hand function.

**Conclusion:** Compression gloves improved hand symptoms and function. Lack of a control group means changes may not be due to glove-wear. A randomized controlled trial is required, including longer follow-up.

**References**

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1 Band 7 Occupational therapist working within field of rheumatology. Part of a MDT committed to providing best practice to service users, committed to ensuring role of the OT embedded into service. Active member of the northwest COTSS-R.

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