

Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy for Adults With Mental Illness: A Review

Context

Mental illness affects approximately one in three Canadians at some point in their lives. For patients experiencing post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, or depression, hyperbaric oxygen therapy has been proposed as a potential treatment option.

Technology

During hyperbaric oxygen therapy, a patient breathes pure oxygen while in a chamber that has been pressurized to a higher-than-normal atmospheric pressure. This increases the amount of oxygen in the patient's blood and tissues, thereby promoting healing. It has been suggested that the procedure might also be useful in treating mental illness by reactivating the brain's metabolic or electrical pathways.

Issue

A review of the clinical effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen therapy for adults with post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, or depression will help to guide decisions about its use in these patients.

Methods

A limited literature search was conducted of key resources, and titles and abstracts of the retrieved publications were reviewed. Full-text publications were evaluated for final article selection according to predetermined selection criteria (population, intervention, comparator, outcomes, and study designs).

Key Message

No evidence was found on the clinical effectiveness of hyperbaric oxygen for the treatment of adults with post-traumatic stress disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, or depression.

Results

The literature search identified 267 citations, with no additional studies identified from other sources. Of the identified studies, 7 were deemed potentially relevant and none met the criteria for inclusion in this review.

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