

# The effect of TAMARS treatments on chronic back pain, disability and quality of life

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## BACKGROUND

Back pain is a common complaint, and is a leading cause of workplace absence in the United Kingdom. **Technology Assisted Micro-Mobilisation and Reflex Stimulation (TAMARS)** is an innovative treatment designed to gently mobilise and realign vertebrae by stimulating stretch reflexes within the paraspinal muscles. The treatment has been in use for approximately 15 years with positive anecdotal results, but a poor research evidence base. The aim of this preliminary study was to investigate the effect of **four** TAMARS treatment sessions on the levels of pain, disability and quality of life reported by chronic back pain sufferers.

## METHODS

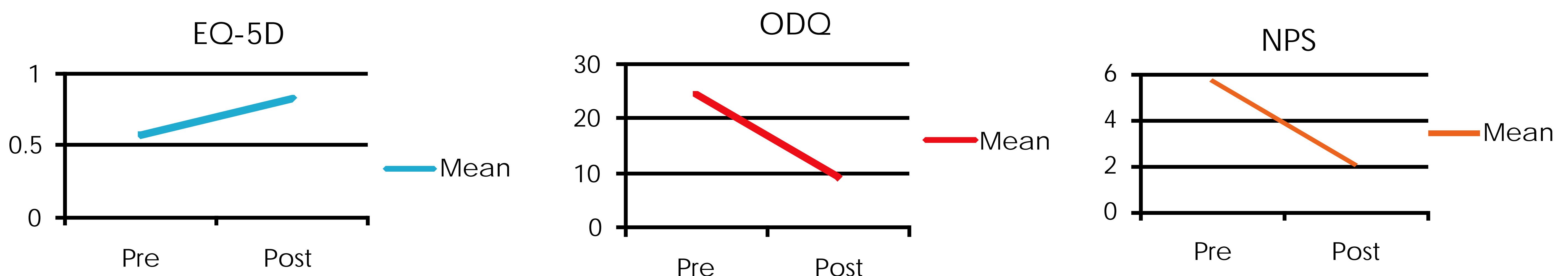
Across two TAMARS treatment centres, 47 consecutively selected new clients (male  $n = 31$ , female  $n = 16$ , mean age 49yrs) suffering from chronic back pain (mean duration = 63 months) were assessed at baseline using three self-administered questionnaires. The client's **Pain** was measured using a 0-10 Numerical Pain Scale (NPS), **Disability** using the Oswestry Low Back Pain Disability Questionnaire (ODQ), and health related **Quality of Life** using the EQ-5D.

Each questionnaire was then repeated after 4 treatment sessions and subjects were blinded as to their initial responses.

## RESULTS

Results were analysed using a T-test for related data.

Mean scores on the NPS and ODQ were found to decrease significantly ( $t = 9.47$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  and  $t = 5.64$ ,  $p < 0.0001$  respectively) while mean scores on the EQ-5D were found to increase significantly ( $t = -5.66$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) between baseline and follow up.



## DISCUSSION

The results of this preliminary study indicate that TAMARS treatments had a positive impact on the levels of pain, disability and quality of life experienced by individuals suffering with chronic back pain. It is clear that further research, in the form of a randomised control trial, would be required to gain more conclusive evidence of the effects of TAMARS treatments but this research shows very promising results.