Virtual Tai Chi program for patients with irritable bowel syndrome with constipation: Proof-of-concept feasibility trial

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Abstract：Background： Satisfaction with current treatment options for irritable bowel syndrome with constipation (IBS-C) is low, with many patients turning to complementary treatments. Tai Chi is a mind–body medicine practice with proven efficacy in other functional disorders. As a proof-of-concept, we tested the feasibility and preliminary clinical outcomes associated with a Tai Chi program designed for IBS-C. **Methods：** A total of 27 IBS-C patients participated in a single-arm trial of 8 sessions of Tai Chi delivered weekly over 7 weeks via live videoconferencing in group format. Clinical improvement was assessed via change in IBS Symptom Severity Score (IBS-SSS) from baseline to 4 weeks posttreatment (week 11) with secondary outcomes exploring symptom ratings, IBS-related quality of life (IBS-QOL), GI-specific anxiety, abdominal distention, and psychological factors. **Key Results：** Despite substantial dropout (n = 7; 26%), the treatment protocol had moderate to excellent feasibility for other criteria. Treatment satisfaction was excellent. Exit interviews confirmed high satisfaction with the program among completers, but a high burden of data collection was noted. One participant experienced an adverse event (mild, exacerbation of sciatica). There was a significant improvement in intra-individual IBS-SSS between baseline and posttreatment (average change −66.5, 95% CI −118.6 to −14.3, p = 0.01). Secondary outcomes were notable for improvements in other IBS symptom scoring measures, IBS-QOL, measured abdominal diameter, and leg strength.**Conclusions and Inferences：** Our data

provide preliminary evidence of the feasibility of a Tai Chi intervention for IBS-C, show promise for improving outcomes, and identify more streamlined data collection as an area for further program improvement.

Key words: clinical trial, complementary therapies, functional colonic diseases, Tai Ji