Visual Phenomena Experienced After Neck and Shoulder Massage: A Case Report
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Background
• Lifetime prevalence of neck and shoulder pain (NSP) up to 70% (1)
• Massage therapy is an effective treatment for NSP (2)
• Visual phenomena following gentle massage to neck and shoulder areas exceedingly rare
• Purpose: To report on a case of a 73-year-old woman with neck and shoulder pain treated with gentle massage who experienced visual phenomena immediately following

Outcomes

Numeric Pain Rating Scale

Outcomes
• Gentle massage to the neck and shoulder area
  • Consistently reduced the patient’s report of pain in that area
  • Including DNM, resulted in increased brightness in the visual field
  • The patient expressed lasting relief from the constant distress of high pain and discomfort in the neck and shoulder area

Discussion
• There is no physiological explanation for gentle soft tissue manipulation of the neck and shoulder and simultaneous changes in the visual field
• Massage stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (3), which constricts pupils, further highlighting how unusual the increase in brightness is
• The patient’s history of macular holes and eye surgeries has no known correlation with increased brightness and the patient has been thoroughly examined for abnormalities
• It is possible that increased perceived brightness following gentle manual manipulation of the neck and shoulder area has become associated in the patient’s brain, creating a neotag that now gets activated

Conclusions
• Further research is needed to try to ascertain an explanation for the patient’s experience of visual phenomena following neck and shoulder massage

Citations: