



Format: Abstract

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[Short-term therapeutic fasting in the treatment of chronic pain and fatigue syndromes--well-being and side effects with and without mineral supplements].

[Article in German]

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Abstract

BACKGROUND: Fasting followed by vegetarian diet has shown to be an effective treatment for rheumatoid arthritis, moreover fasting is frequently used as an adjunctive treatment in chronic pain and stress/exhaustion syndromes. Data on well-being and the frequency of side effects during fasting are mostly retrospective. Mineral supplements are frequently used in order to compensate for fasting-induced tissue acidosis and to reduce side effects. There are only limited data that support this practice.

OBJECTIVE: To study the effects of oral mineral supplements on common side effects and well-being during short-term fasting.

PATIENTS AND METHODS: 209 consecutive inpatients with chronic pain/exhaustion syndromes were recruited. In a controlled non-randomised study design all patients underwent fasting (250 kcal; 3 l fluid intake/day) over 7 days, in study phase 1 without (n = 103) and in study phase 2 with (n = 106) concomitant prescription of standardised oral mineral supplements (3 x 2 to 3 x 3 Bullrich's Vital). Weight, blood pressure and urinary pH were recorded daily. Well-being and mood as well as common side effects (i.e. fatigue, hunger, heart burn, headache) were assessed with standardised self-reports.

RESULTS: Baseline characteristics of the 209 patients (mean age 54.7 +/- 10.5 years; 83.3% female) were balanced. Both groups showed a fasting-induced decrease of blood pressure, a slight decrease in mood and well-being on days 3 and 4 with consecutive increase and moderate hunger, i.e. in the evening. Side effects and general tolerability of fasting as well as well-being and mood were not different between the groups. There were no serious side effects in both groups.

CONCLUSIONS: Short-term fasting in inpatients with pain and stress syndromes is safe and well tolerated, concomitant mineral supplements have no additive benefit.

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