Kinesiology taping in cellulite: A proposal for a novel treatment and report of first results

Plastrowanie kinezjologiczne na celulit: Propozycja nowej terapii i opis pierwszych wyników

Tomasz Wilk, Magdalena Nieweglowska-Wilk, Radoslaw Spiewak

Department of Experimental Dermatology and Cosmetology, Faculty of Pharmacy, Jagiellonian University Medical College, Krakow, Poland

Abstract

Kinesiology taping has been used for many years by physiotherapists in orthopaedic, neurological, paediatric, oncological and postoperative physical therapy, as well as in pain management and sports medicine. In the presented article, we propose a novel application of kinesiology taping in the reduction of cellulite. We also describe first observations of the effects of this method in a 32-year-old female patient with first-degree cellulite on the thighs. The tapes were applied on the lateral surfaces of the right thigh, stretching from the hip joint towards the knee, and were kept in this location for 72 hours. After removal of the tapes, both the patient, and the treating cosmetologist and physiotherapist assessed the skin condition in the treated area as clearly improved. We conclude that the use of adhesive elastic therapeutic tape seems a promising method for reducing cellulite. Further controlled studies of an adequately large population of patients with various degrees of cellulite are necessary to confirm these preliminary observations.

Keywords: cellulite, physiotherapy, cosmetology, kinesiology taping, elastic therapeutic tape

Streszczenie

Kinesiology taping has been used for many years by physiotherapists in orthopaedic, neurological, paediatric, oncological and postoperative physical therapy, as well as in pain management and sports medicine. In the presented article, we propose a novel application of kinesiology taping in the reduction of cellulite. We also describe first observations of the effects of this method in a 32-year-old female patient with first-degree cellulite on the thighs. The tapes were applied on the lateral surfaces of the right thigh, stretching from the hip joint towards the knee, and were kept in this location for 72 hours. After removal of the tapes, both the patient, and the treating cosmetologist and physiotherapist assessed the skin condition in the treated area as clearly improved. We conclude that the use of adhesive elastic therapeutic tape seems a promising method for reducing cellulite. Further controlled studies of an adequately large population of patients with various degrees of cellulite are necessary to confirm these preliminary observations.

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Case report

A 32-year-old female patient with visible cellulite underwent a routine cosmetology consultation. An experienced cosmetologist diagnosed the patient with the first degree of cellulite on the lateral sides of the thighs (fig. 1). After excluding contraindications, an expe-
rienced physiotherapist applied the kinesiology taping (Kinesio® tape). The patient was taped at the site of present cellulite, i.e. on the right thigh along the lateral surface, with the tapes stretching from the hip joint to the knee (fig. 2).

Figure 1. Lateral side of the right thigh before application of kinesiology taping

Figure 2. Application of elastic therapeutic tapes (Kinesio® tapes)

Figure 3. Treated area 72 hours after removal of elastic therapeutic tapes

The opposite thigh was left untreated for comparison. The patient reported a sensation of heat, pulling and tightening in the area throughout the whole time of the treatment, most pronounced in the first 24 hours. After 72 hours, the tapes were removed and the patient was examined again by the same cosmetologist and physiotherapist. The patient and both specialists found a considerable improvement in the skin at the site of tape application. The skin seemed better supplied with blood, more elastic, supple and firm, while cellulite seemed less visible than before the procedure. This effect was still visible after the subsequent 3 days (fig. 3). No change was noted on the untreated control side.

Discussion

Cellulite is a non-inflammatory dystrophy of subcutaneous tissue. This condition affects most commonly the thighs, lower legs, arms and abdomen [4]. Cellulite develops in four stages: Stage 0 – the surface of the skin remains smooth; however, a slight “orange-peel” effect becomes visible when the skin is pinched gently between forefinger and a thumb. Stage I - there is a slight fibrosis of the subcutaneous tissue and when the pinch test is applied, a lumpiness or unevenness of the skin surface can be noticed. The surface effects are minimal, yet the “orange peel” look of the skin can easily be detected. Stage II - the symptoms exacerbate, there is a significant subcutaneous fibrosis and small nodules are palpable under the skin surface. The skin appears tethered and puckered without pinching. Stage III (final stage) is marked by hard palpable nodules of collagen in the dermal region, which may press on nerve fibres and capillaries, causing pain. The surface displays considerable unevenness, and can easily bruise when pressed or pinched [5]. Among many possible factors that may be responsible for the development of cellulite are circulatory disturbances, flaccidity of connective tissue and disorders of the lymphatic system.

Conclusions

Despite substantial research efforts and numerous products released each year, there is still a need for a safe and effective method for treating cellulite. We believe that elastic therapeutic tapes may fill the present gap in cellulite reduction. The presented paper marks the beginning of systematic, controlled research for the safety and effectiveness of kinesiology taping in the treatment of cellulite that will be continued by our team.

References


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The authors declare no conflict of interest with regard to the present article.

Address for correspondence

mgr Magdalena Nieweglowska-Wilk
Department of Experimental Dermatology and Cosmetology
Jagiellonian University
ul. Medyczna 9, 30-688 Krakow, Poland
Tel.: +48 12 620 58 30, Fax: +48 12 620 56 45
E-mail: magdalena.nieweglowska-wilk@uj.edu.pl

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