

Treatments using elements of Kobido massage for anti-ageing prevention and relaxation

Zabiegi z wykorzystaniem elementów masażu kobido w profilaktyce przeciwstarzeniowej i relaksacji

ABSTRACT

The growing emphasis on maintaining a youthful appearance is driven by increased public awareness of the importance of good health and an attractive appearance, which going hand in hand with social development. Kobido massage is a suggested technique for enhancing the look and state of facial skin, serving as a non-surgical alternative to a facelift. The procedure employs specific manual techniques executed by a skilled specialist.

This study aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of selected elements of kobido massage on improving the appearance of the skin, relaxing facial muscles, reducing their tension and improving blood and lymph circulation in the head area. The study included a group of 27 women who received 10 of the same treatments.

The most frequently observed effects of the sequence of procedures were a reduction in tension and smoothing of facial skin folds, as well as a change in facial contour. The obtained results were consistent with the expectations of the majority of the participants. Kobido massage can be an effective method of improving the appearance of facial skin and may be a safe alternative to surgical lifting.

Keywords: kobido massage, relaxation techniques, facial muscle relaxation, aging

STRESZCZENIE

Wzrost świadomości społeczeństwa na temat dbałości o dobry stan zdrowia i atrakcyjny wygląd, idący wraz z rozwojem społecznym sprawiają, że zachowanie młodego wyglądu nabiera coraz większego znaczenia. Jedną z proponowanych metod poprawy wyglądu i kondycji skóry twarzy, stanowiącą alternatywę dla chirurgicznego liftingu, jest masaż kobido. Wykorzystuje on wybrane techniki manualne wykonywane ręką specjalisty.

Celem pracy była ocena skuteczności oddziaływania wybranych elementów masażu kobido na poprawę wyglądu skóry, rozluźnienie mięśni twarzy, redukcję ich napięcia oraz poprawę krążenia krwi i limfy w obrębie głowy. Badaniem objęto grupę 27 kobiet, u których zastosowano 10 takich samych zabiegów.

Najczęściej obserwowanymi efektami cyklu zabiegów było zmniejszenie napięć i wygładzenie fałdów skóry twarzy oraz zmiana obrysu twarzy. Uzyskane wyniki były zgodne z oczekiwaniami większości badanych. Masaż kobido może być skuteczną metodą poprawy wyglądu skóry twarzy oraz może stanowić bezpieczną alternatywę dla chirurgicznego liftingu.

Słowa kluczowe: masaż kobido, techniki relaksujące, rozluźnienie mięśni twarzy, starzenie się

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of optimal health and appealing physical appearance becomes the subject of ageing increasingly significant. Over time, the skin experiences a decrease in elasticity, resulting in wrinkles and alterations in face

proportions. A multitude number of people are seeking efficient techniques to maintain their youthful appearance and delay the process of ageing.

One method used to reduce the visual effects of aging that is gaining popularity is a Japanese massage called kobido.

It utilizes carefully developed manipulative techniques performed by the hand of a specialist, which include compression, rubbing and patting to stimulate the production of collagen fibers and improve skin trophics. Regular use of the treatment can lead to an enhanced appearance of the skin by reducing wrinkles, increasing elasticity, firmness and overall improvement in the condition of the skin.

The origins of this type of massage date back to the 14th century and are based on the Japanese philosophy that the health and beauty of the body is dependent on the balance of the vital energy “ki.” The knowledge of the flow of this energy in the facial area and the ability to balance the state of internal organs and emotions is crucial and unique feature of Japanese facial massage. It consists of several techniques to improve the circulation of blood and lymph in the facial area, as well as to release tension and reduce stress levels. The result is an improvement in the appearance of the skin, as well as a reduction in the size of wrinkles and other signs of the aging process. The effect of the treatment also includes the use of natural oils and cosmetics that regenerate the skin and improve its condition.

Massage stimulates facial sensory nerve endings, resulting in improved blood circulation and enhanced skin nutrition [1]. Focusing on the skin, muscles and the vital energy “ki”, the treatment involves the use of varied techniques based on multiple manual moves, ranging from gentle surface strokes to deeper pressure. The movements in this facial massage are based on a combination of vibration, stroking and pinching. The speed at which the massage is performed depends on the stage of the treatment. In the relaxation stage it is slow, while in the lifting part it is dynamic in order to stimulate the synthesis of collagen and elastin fibers.

There is a great concentration of sensory receptors in the skin of the face, and according to the theory of Japanese massage, gentle pressure on these nerve points increases the flow of “ki” energy, leading to a natural lifting. Although positive effects may be visible after the first treatment, it is initially recommended to perform them every 4-7 days, gradually increasing the intervals between sessions. Thus, the treatment using Japanese massage techniques can be considered as a method to beautify the face and improve blood circulation in the skin. In addition, it relaxes and stimulates collagen production [2].

MAIN COMPONENTS OF THE TREATMENT USING ELEMENTS OF KOBIDO MASSAGE

Kobido massage consists of several techniques, performed by a therapist.

1. Deep tissue massage. The treatment begins by working out the neck and upper back area in a sitting position. Therapeutic movements are slow and gentle in order to reduce muscle tension in the superficial and deep back muscles. Then, after changing the position of the body to

lying backwards, using the same technique, the tissues located in the face and neck are affected, resulting in the smoothing of wrinkles. The treatment is performed without the use of oils or other lubricants, reaching as deeply as possible into all tissues.

2. Relaxation massage. This stage of the treatment introduces a state of deep relaxation, reduces stress and improves the mood of the person being massaged.
3. Lymphatic drainage. It improves mainly the flow of lymph, but also blood. Moreover, it removes toxins from the skin and enhances tissue oxygenation.
4. Lifting techniques. They are based on performing intense pinching, patting and stretching movements on the skin, which improve the oval of the face, reduce wrinkles and make the skin more elastic.
5. Acupressure massage. It involves pressing specific points on the face to improve blood and lymph circulation and restore energy balance.

All the elements of the entire treatment come together to form a cohesive and holistic therapy that aims to improve the condition of the skin, reduce signs of aging and relax the entire body [3-5].

Kobido massage is considered a safe method, however, there are contraindications that prevent the procedure from being performed or force the need to modify massage techniques.

TECHNIQUES FOR PERFORMING THE PROCEDURE

The treatment consists of five techniques used in kobido massage: deep tissue massage, relaxation, lymphatic drainage, lifting massage and acupressure.

The practical part begins with massage of the back muscles in the client's sitting position. After working out the quadriceps and deep muscles of the back, a deep tissue massage of the neck and face in a lying position is applied.

Deep tissue massage

It focuses on fascia and soft tissue manipulation. The fascia is an endless network of connective tissue fibers, and local changes in its structure affect the entire back area. Working within this structure leads to improved back muscle function by lengthening tissues that are in shortening, balancing tensions between muscle antagonists and agonists, and improving morphological symmetry.

Deep tissue massage is a modern form of massage that aims to relax soft tissues and improve their mobility. The therapist uses a variety of techniques to minimize the use of force and act deliberately in response to the patient's body reactions. There are many concepts for this form of massage, and most techniques are derived from structural integration and musculo-fascial relaxation. The philosophy of the therapy is to listen to the person being massaged, to see them holistically,

to make an accurate functional and palpation assessment, and to apply the various techniques consciously.

Relaxing the tendon cap is a crucial step of the entire procedure. A method for loosening is to retract the cap by pulling it through the hair. If these are not available, a method of manipulating the scalp with the fingertips is employed. The tendon cap is an integral part of the cranial muscle, the tension of which causes the eyebrows to lift and create horizontal furrows on the forehead. This technique helps to relax the tension of the muscle and smooth out wrinkles on the forehead.

After relaxing the tendon cap, the next stage of the massage targets the relaxation of the facial muscles.

Relaxation stage

It is an essential part of the treatment, aimed primarily at relaxing and preparing the client's body for the next steps. It begins with aromatherapy and the distribution of an oil on the treated area. The effect of relaxation massage on the body is to integrate the action of various body systems and improve their functioning. The treatment leads to deep relaxation and elimination of excessive muscle tension, which contributes to restoring harmony in the body and calming the mind. As a result, a state of relaxation and rest is achieved. After that, the next phase is lymphatic drainage.

Lymphatic drainage and lifting

This stage begins with decongestion of the large lymph nodes, followed by stimulation of lymph flow toward the venous angles. Drainage is performed in a spiral motion acting on the axillary nodes, supraclavicular pits, neck and submandibular areas. Drainage is characterized by a gradual increase in pressure on the tissues forcing the drainage of lymph. The slow movement of lymph requires a gentle and unhurried approach to massage, employing techniques that involve applying pressure.

The next step engages lifting techniques consisting of intense "percussion" movements, pinching and patting, which improve the oval of the face, shallower wrinkles and make the skin more elastic.

Acupressure

The final part of the treatment is acupressure. This practice is derived from traditional Chinese medicine, which involves treating blocked "ki" energy by applying pressure with the fingers to meridian points. According to Taoism, a Chinese view of the cosmos, the well-being of an individual is dependent on achieving harmony and internal equilibrium between the opposing forces of Yin and Yang. Disruption of the "ki" energy flow can result in the development of illness. Reestablishing the interrupted energy flow is achieved by exerting pressure on specific acupressure spots. Chinese scientists conducted a study in the 1980s, finding that endorphins are released during acupressure therapy. By applying pressure to selected

points on the face, nerve receptors are stimulated, thus reducing pain of various origins, boosting skin condition, reducing wrinkles or improving facial oval [2, 3, 6, 7, 9-14].

AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to evaluate the effects of the procedure performed in the light of anti-aging prevention by comparing the appearance of the skin, the size of wrinkles, the reduction of swelling, the evaluation of the facial oval before and immediately after the treatments. In addition, the relaxation effect of the treatment was evaluated.

STUDY MATERIAL AND METHODS

The study was conducted on a group of 27 women between the ages of 25 and 69 (average age 40) who underwent a series of 10 treatments using elements of kobido massage. Each treatment lasted 100 minutes. In order to show the possible differential effects of the treatments on the skin, the participants were divided into a group of young (age 25-35, n=13) and mature women (over 36, n=14).

The therapy based on the use of manual techniques involves subtle tactile sensations that are not measurable by any devices. The evaluation of skin parameters using accurately calibrated devices cannot be considered, as lubricating preparations provided during the massage have an impact on the final outcome of the treatment. For this reason, the effects of the applied procedures were evaluated by visual analysis of selected facial points. Photographic documentation and the use of a subjective rating scale of the study group of women, were intended to demonstrate the effectiveness of massage as a preventive and therapeutic method. The series of treatments was completed 4 months after the start of the study.

The photographs were taken with the same camera, keeping the image parameters constant (light intensity, resolution, focal length, focus) without using any photocorrecting programs. At the time the image was captured, the women maintained a still position with completely relaxed facial muscles, a closed mouth, and open eyes.

The following furrows and folds located in the face were evaluated:

- frontal folds - two or three transversely running folds over the eye sockets,
- interbrow folds - two or three vertical furrows between the eyebrow arches,
- upper eyelid crease - runs parallel to the edge of the upper eyelid,
- radial folds (crow's feet) - occur in the form of spreading multidirectionally short furrows near the lateral angle of the eye,
- nasolabial furrow - is a fold separating the wing of the nose from the cheek, runs in an arc to the corner of the mouth,
- angular furrow - limits the chin by running in an arc from the angle of the mouth to the edge of the mandibular body,

- lift gutter (nasolabial fold) - occurs as a depression lying between the nasal septum and upper lip,
- chin-labial furrow - runs transversely on the border of the lower edge of the circular muscle of the mouth and the chin muscle [8, 15].

The evaluation of the changes in the aforementioned structures was complemented by an assessment of the shape and size of the eyelid crevice and the facial oval defined by the region of the mandibular angle, cheek and mandibular body.

Participants who had contraindications to the treatment were excluded based on a proprietary questionnaire that they completed. The massage therapy began with proper preparation the skin. Initially, the process of removing makeup was carried out, eliminating any traces of makeup and purifying the skin. Subsequently, images of the face were captured, ensuring the preservation of identical documentation settings. Once the preliminary stage was over, the procedure was performed. All individuals had a series of treatments under identical conditions. The initial three massages were conducted at intervals of 4-7 days. The following three were conducted with a time gap of 7 days between each. The seventh and eighth massages were performed with a time period of 10-14 days. The previous two were conducted with a one-month interval. Over the course of the complete series of 10 treatments, the condition of the participants' facial skin was closely observed and evaluated. The treatments were assessed for any alterations in the skin. All the information were gathered regarding the characteristics of the skin, including its quality, appearance, firmness, elasticity, and the presence of wrinkles.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows a participant from the 36+ age group. Frontal folds presented in the photo on the right were diminished and less prominent. Similarly, the radial furrows near the lateral angle of the eye looked more "fuzzy" and less contrasting. The shallowing of the cervical furrows had a significant effect on reducing the depth of wrinkles in this area. In turn, the shallowing of the angular furrow resulted in a smoother transition of the chin to the cheek leveling the boundary between these parts of the face to a small extent. As a result of the change in muscle tone, an improvement in the facial oval was noticeable, especially there was a softening of the contour and a shallowing of the indentation exactly at the level of the angular furrow. There was also a noticeable significant change in the proportion of the facial shape, i.e. an alignment of the base of the mandible. In addition, the difference in the outline of the nose is was also observed. The lightening of the dark areas in the nasal area, and especially in the area of the medial angle of the eye, indicated a softening of its contours and a smoothing of the skin. The chin-labial furrow, which was clearly outlined before the treatments, became noticeably

shallower after the series of treatments, resulting in smoother skin in the chin area.

In figure 2 is presented another woman from the 36+ age group. Shallowed and less pronounced frontal and interbrow folds were noticed. The nasolabial furrow has become became flatter. Also, the shallowing of the cervical furrows gave a clear effect on reducing the depth of wrinkles in this area. The post-treatment fissure also turned out to be less sharp as it became shallower. As a result of the change in muscle tone of the expressive muscles, an improvement in the oval of the face was noticeable, especially there was a softening of the contour and a shallowing of the indentation at the level of the angular furrow. There was also a significant change in the proportions of the facial shape, i.e. an alignment of the base of the mandible. The lightening of the dark areas in the nasal area, especially around the medial angle of the eye, indicated a softening of its contours and a smoothing of the skin.

Most noticeable in figure 3 was the change in the static wrinkles of the forehead (frontal folds) and around the eyes to more superficial. Similarly, the interbrow and radial folds became shallower and less prominent. The eyelid crevice was noticeably enlarged. The shallowing of the angular furrow resulted in a smoother transition of the chin to the cheek leveling the boundary between these parts of the face to a small extent. The shallowing of the chin-labial furrow resulted in a smoother transition of the lower lip into the chin. There was also a noticeable change in the proportions of the face shape, from rectangular to more oval.

Figure 4 illustrates the effects after a series of 10 massages in a woman from the younger group. The relaxation of the interbrow fold was observed. The skin of the smooth forehead looked less undulating. The frontal folds have also become less prominent. The eyelid crevice enlarged, the upper eyelid fold and the distal part of the eyebrows were visibly raised. The proportions of the face changed, the base of the forehead was wider, and the mandibular area became slimmer.

In figure 5, there was a noticeable effect of shallowing and more "fuzzy" frontal and interbrow folds, which may indicated a reduction in the tension of the brow crease muscle and the longitudinal muscle. The swelling under the eyes flattened and decreased. There was also a shallowing of the nasolabial furrow. The face slimmed down as a result of lymph drainage and the use of lifting techniques during the massage. A change in the proportions of the facial shape was also observed. There was an alignment of the base of the jaw as a result of sharpening the angle of the jaw and slimming the chin area. The shallowing of the cervical furrows resulted in a noticeable smoothing effect on the skin of this area.

Figure 6 shows the youngest, 25-year-old woman. It was difficult to detect static wrinkles in such a young person, but upon close imaging analysis a few changes were observed. The slight tension of the interbrow folds, had almost completely



Fig. 1 A woman in the age group over 36 years old. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive



Fig. 2 A woman from the over 36 age group. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive



Fig. 3 A woman from the age group over 36 years old. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive



Fig. 4 A woman from the group under 36 years old. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive



Fig. 5 A woman from the group under 36 years old. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive



Fig. 6 A woman from the group under 36 years old. Before and after the procedure
Source: Author's own archive

disappeared after the treatment series. The eyelid crevice slightly enlarged, and the facial oval lifted which was best seen at the angles of the jaw. The disappearance of the angular furrow could also be observed.

DISCUSSION

Some studies suggest that the deep-tissue massage, focused on relaxing the tendon cap and frontal belly of the occipito-frontalis muscle, may be beneficial in reducing abnormal tension in the musculo-fascial system. The results of these studies indicate an improvement in tissue elasticity after a single treatment [12]. Observation of the treatment effects after the massage showed that in most of the women studied, the best visual effects occurred in the frontal and interbrow folds. The participants themselves observed them after 4-6 treatments. There were no significant differences in the effects of the performed treatment according to age group, while in the 5 women participating in the study, with the exception of the relaxation sensation, no obvious distinctions in appearance were observed.

The study included a self-assessment of the facial changes experienced by women after the procedure, which contributed to the analysis. In both age groups, the participants reported a reduction in muscle tension and, in the younger group, an additional slimming of the face. While the study did not specifically focus on evaluating facial skin hydration, it is important to note that a significant number of women subjectively saw noticeable improvements in facial skin moisture and smoothness (Figure 7).

The women surveyed reported feeling secure and free from concerns about any potential difficulties during the massage, perceiving it as a source of relaxation. This aspect is crucial to the overall process, as the favourable encounter and absence of apprehension regarding adverse reactions might enhance patients' general satisfaction and motivation to persist with or replicate the treatment. A significant majority of the women surveyed expressed the belief that the set of treatments

administered may serve as a viable substitute for conventional aesthetic medical procedures, such as surgical facelifts. This suggests that the kobido massage is believed to be a natural and non-invasive approach of enhancing one's look and diminishing the visible effects of skin ageing.

Performing a collective evaluation of the achieved effects of the treatment of the studied group of women, it can be concluded that the most common visual improvement was in the frontal and interbrow folds and the angular furrow (n=10), the nasolabial furrow (n=7), and the chin-labial furrow (n=6). Eyelid crevice enlargement was found in 7, and oval improvement in 6 participants.

Summarizing the analysis, the most frequently observed effects of the procedure performed were: shallowed wrinkles in the eye and mouth areas, smoothed facial skin folds and a change in the contour of the face. The results achieved in the study were in line with the expectations of the majority of participants. There was no significant variation in the effects of the treatment according to the age of the women studied. This suggests that the proposed treatment using elements of kobido massage can be effective regardless of age group and can produce similar therapeutic effects for women of any age.

CONCLUSIONS

The most frequently observed effect of the procedure performed with elements of kobido massage is a reduction in skin tension, mainly in the eye and lip areas. In the subjective perception of the participants was an improvement in the hydration and softness of the facial skin. The results obtained were in line with the expectations of most of the women surveyed. This is an important information for massage therapists, who should adjust their actions to obtain mainly those effects that are most expected, applying the principle of individual approach to clients.

The results suggest that the procedure can be perceived as a natural, non-invasive, relaxing method of improving facial appearance and reducing signs of skin ageing.

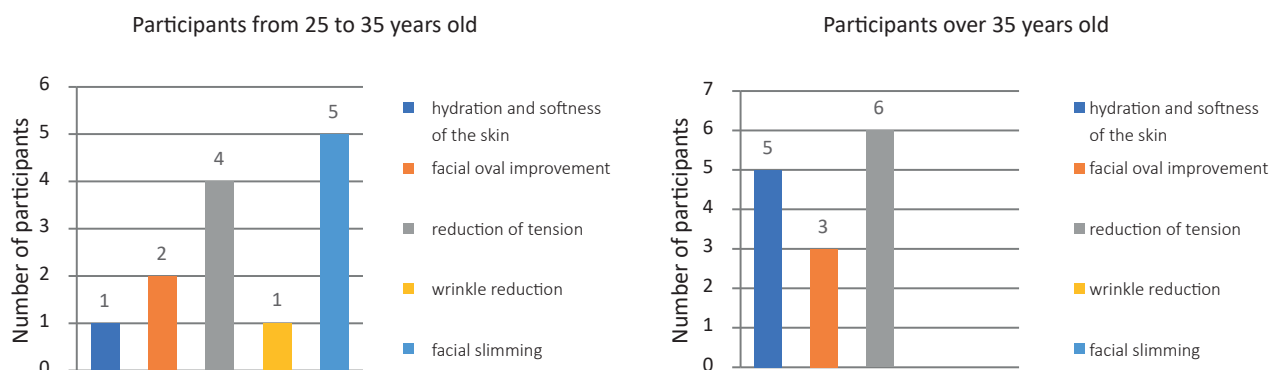


Fig. 7 The observed results of the procedure in the assessment of the examined group of women

Source: Own elaboration

SUMMARY

With the constant progress of civilization and the accelerating pace of life, more and more people are experiencing chronic stress. As a result, there is a growing demand for various methods of relaxation, including kobido massage. The effects of this treatment lead to an improvement in facial appearance by smoothing visible wrinkles, correcting eyelid crevices, reducing swelling, or improving facial oval. In addition, the treatment provides an excellent form of relaxation. By taking advantage of the availability of new technologies, massage therapists and cosmetologists can enrich the services they offer, resulting in even greater benefits for clients. The prospects for the development of Japanese massage seem promising, and it is worth continuing research into this method to fully realize its potential and increase its popularity on the Polish market.

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