



Title	Colon Hydrotherapy-An Update
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Reference	Technology Review Report, 012/2009. http://medicaldev.moh.gov.my/uploads/tr_2009/colon.pdf

Aim

To assess the safety, effectiveness, and cost effectiveness of colon hydrotherapy for body detoxification, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, and diverticulosis.

Conclusions and results

The search strategies yielded 2 articles on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) premarket notifications for devices used in colon cleansing and 1 article issued by the Texas Attorney General. Seven articles (case series/case report/cross sectional studies) related to the adverse events of colon hydrotherapy. As for effectiveness, 1 technology review and 3 cross sectional studies were retrieved.

In the United States, the FDA approves treatments for patients only when medically indicated, eg, prior to undergoing radiologic or endoscopic examination.

There was poor level of evidence to suggest that commercial colonic hydrotherapy performed by individuals themselves or by alternative medicine practitioners may lead to adverse events such as colon or rectal perforations, abscess, perineal gangrene, abdominal pain, abdominal cramps, distended abdomen, rectal bleeding, outbreaks such as amoebiasis and death.

There was poor-level and insufficient evidence to suggest the effectiveness of colon hydrotherapy for constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, and fecal incontinence. There was no retrievable evidence on the cost effectiveness of colon hydrotherapy. Experienced and trained practitioners should perform colon hydrotherapy, and the practice should be regulated.

Recommendations

Based on the review, more high-quality clinical research is warranted for various application of this technology in different conditions, eg, constipation, irritable bowel syndrome, and fecal incontinence. Hence, commercial use of colon hydrotherapy when not medically indicated cannot be recommended until more high-quality evidence is available.

Methods

Electronic databases, including PubMed, Ovid MEDLINE from 1950 to May (2nd week) 2009, EBM Reviews-Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials, EBM Reviews-Cochrane database of systematic reviews, EBM Reviews-HTA Databases, Horizon Scanning database (EuroScan, Australia and New Zealand Horizon Scanning, defra), FDA website, MHRA, and Google, were searched for published reports. No limits were placed on the search. Relevant articles were critically appraised using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) and were evidence graded using US / Canadian Preventive Services Task Force.

Further research/reviews required

More clinical research is warranted for various applications of this technology.