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ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Do Far-infrared Saunas Have Cardiovascular Benefits in People with Type 2 Diabetes?

Richard Beever, BSc MD CCFP CI

Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, Clinical Assistant Professor, Faculty of Medicine, Department of Family Practice, University of British Columbia

ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE

Far-infrared saunas are beneficial for the treatment of congestive heart failure, hypertension and obesity. As such, they may have a beneficial effect on cardiovascular (CV) health in those with type 2 diabetes. Our objective is to examine whether or not there are quantitative CV benefits from infrared sauna use.

METHODS

The intervention consisted of 20-minute, thriceweekly infrared sauna sessions, over a period of 3 months. The following CV risk factors were measured: weight, height, waist circumference, blood pressure (BP_{tru}), glycated hemoglobin (A1C), fasting blood glucose and cholesterol profile. Baseline study parameters were measured within one week prior to commencing sauna sessions. Post-intervention measurements were collected between 1 and 3 days after the last sauna session.

RESULTS

Systolic blood pressure decreased by 6.4 mm Hg (124 ± 12 vs. 118 ± 15 mm Hg, 95% CI 0.01-12.71 $p = 0.05$), and there was a trend toward decreased waist circumference (115.0 ± 13.4 vs. 112.7 ± 11.9 cm, 95% CI 0.4-5.1 $p = 0.10$). All other measurements did not change significantly. There were no adverse events. Study completion rate was 75%.

CONCLUSION

Our results suggest that infrared sauna use may be beneficial for lowering blood pressure and waist circumference. Subject adherence to infrared sauna use is greater than adherence to other lifestyle interventions. The combination of favourable compliance/adherence, as well as effectiveness in improving blood pressure and possibly waist circumference, makes infrared sauna therapy an attractive lifestyle option.

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1499267110420079>