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### **Comparison of the effectiveness of conventional therapies and hirudotherapy in the treatment of varicose veins**

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**Background & Aim:** It's aimed to compare the effectiveness of the conventional medical therapies and hirudotherapy in the treatment of varicose veins.

**Method:** The study is a controlled, open labeled clinical trial, and conducted on 41 patients who were diagnosed with chronic venous insufficiency. The study was conducted at the Acupuncture and Complementary Medicine Practice and Research Center in Ataturk University, from June 2013 to January 2014. in the leech therapy group, patients had a 10-sessions therapy. in each session 5 leeches were applied on the leg with varicose vein. The control group composed of randomly selected 29 patients who first time had the diagnoses of varicose vein and complied with given medical treatment.

**Results:** There was statistically significant difference between pretreatment VAS (65.12 mm±20.5 mm) and post treatment VAS (34.12 mm±24.45mm) in the leech therapy group (p<0.01). The induced therapeutic effect of hirudotherapy continued thorough 6 months and there was a statistically significant difference between the pretreatment VAS and VAS at 6th month (p=0.004). There were a statistically significant differences between baseline and 3rd month hemoglobin levels (14.18 gr/dl±1,48gr/dl and 12.80 gr/dl±1.56gr/dl, respectively; p<0.01) and platelet values (249.26±66.68 and 270.39±1.48, respectively; p=0.001). There were no difference in other studied parameters.

**Conclusion:** in the leech therapy group, an improvement was seen in the pain symptom in the patients with chronic venous insufficiency. in the patients with chronic venous insufficiency, the decrease of the VAS for pain after hirudotherapy demonstrates an increase in the quality of life of the patients. in the light of these findings, we conclude that hirudotherapy may be alternate therapy modality for the treatment of chronic venous insufficiency. Our finding should be re-evaluated with controlled trials composing of larger number of patients.