



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PSYCHOLOGY AND NEUROSCIENCE

MARCH 15-16, 2023 | (Hotel Crowne Plaza Dubai - Deira)



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The Effect of Facial EMS Device on the Mental Health in Women - A Pilot Study

According to a scientific overview released by the World Health Organization (WHO), the global prevalence of anxiety and depression increased significantly by 25% in the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic. The brief highlights that young people, women and people with pre-existing mental disorders are most affected. Also, the global COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lifestyles greatly, and one of the biggest changes that we are now required to wear masks. The use of face masks was protective for both health-care workers and people in the community exposed to infection, with both the frequentist and Bayesian analyses lending support to face mask use irrespective of setting. On the other hand, wearing masks obscure the lower half of our facial expressions and have changed the way we communicate. Wearing face masks can affect the communication behavior of speakers and listeners. In fact, it has been empirically reported that masking the lower half of facial expressions hinders the recognition of emotions from facial expressions and reduces their accuracy.

Therefore, we targeted women and assessed the effects of facial EMS device on the mental health in this study. We recruited Community-dwelling women (N = 20, age range = 34-50 years). A facial EMS device of 10 min was used every day for 12 weeks. The GHQ-12 for mental health and facial muscle power were measured. After the intervention, the GHQ-12 and facial muscle power significantly improved post-intervention.

These results suggest that facial EMS device is effective in improving the mental health and facial muscle function of women, but future studies should investigate effects in randomized controlled study designs.

Keywords: covid-19, women, facial muscle, EMS, mental health

Biography:

Rumiko Okamoto received her PhD in Applied Science in Human Care (2020) from the University of Tsukuba, Japan. During her studies, she spent a short term at Kyung Hee University East-West Neo Medical Center in South Korea in 2018 for training in the facial nerve rehabilitation program. After completing her studies, she worked as a researcher at the Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Medical Science, and has been in her current position since 2021. Her focus is research and development of facial muscle self-care programs for mental health.