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Anthroposophic therapies in chronic disease: the Anthroposophic Medicine Outcomes Study (AMOS).

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CONTEXT: Anthroposophic medicine (AM) is used worldwide for chronic diseases. **OBJECTIVE:** To study clinical outcomes and costs in patients treated with AM therapies for chronic conditions. **DESIGN:** Prospective cohort study. **SETTING:** 141 medical practices in Germany providing AM treatment. **PARTICIPANTS AND INTERVENTIONS:** 898 outpatients aged 1-75 years referred to AM therapies (art, eurythmy or rhythmical massage, n = 665) or starting AM medical treatment (counselling, medicines, n = 233). **MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES:** Disease severity assessed independently by physician (Disease Score) and patient (Symptom Score), and health-related quality of life (SF-36, KINDL, KITA) after 3, 6, 12, 18, and 24 months; health costs in pre-study year and first study year. **RESULTS:** Most common indications were mental disorders (32.0%), and musculoskeletal disorders (18.9%). Disease duration at baseline was median 3.0 years (interquartile range = i.q.r. 1.0-8.5, mean 6.5 +/- 8.4 years). Median number of AM therapy sessions was 12 (i.q.r. 10-20), median therapy duration was 120 days (i.q.r. 81-195). From baseline to 6-month follow-up, Disease Score (0-10) improved from 6.40 +/- 1.76 to 3.43 +/- 2.23 (p < 0.001), Symptom Score (0-10) improved from 5.89 +/- 1.75 to 3.35 +/- 2.09 (p < 0.001). In adults, SF-36 Physical Component Summary improved from mean 43.34 +/- 10.58 at baseline to 47.44 +/- 10.32 after 6 months (p < 0.001), SF-36 Mental Component Summary improved from 38.83 +/- 12.45 to 44.93 +/- 10.92 (p < 0.001). Similar HRQoL improvements were observed in children (KINDL, KITA). All improvements remained stable until 24-month follow-up. Adverse effects from AM therapies occurred in 2.7% (19/712) of patients. Three (0.5%) patients stopped therapy due to adverse effects. Health costs were 3,637 Euro per patient in the pre-study year and 3,484 Euro in the first study year, a decrease of 152 Euro (4.2%) per patient. **CONCLUSION:** Anthroposophic therapies were associated with long-term reduction of chronic disease symptoms, improvement of health-related quality of life, and health cost reduction.

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