A Discussion About Cupping: Lessons from Rio
Agenda:
• Historical Background of Cupping
• Cupping vs. Myofascial Decompression
• What We Know and Don’t Know
• Take Away
Similar “Fads” in Sports

A Brief History of Cupping

2000 BC - China

400 BC - Greece

1550 BC - Egypt

Olympic Games: August 7, 2016


https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hippocrates

http://bit.ly/2t20cCm

Why Michael Phelps, other Olympic athletes use cupping therapy for recovery
Cupping vs Myofascial Decompression

**Traditional Cupping:**
- Wet Cupping (Hijama)\(^1\) – An Arabic form of cupping. Small incision created and blood vacuumed out.
- Dry Cupping – No incision.

**Myofascial Decompression:**
- Myofascial release via negative pressure from a cup combined with functional movements to separate fascia.\(^2\)
- Different than “compressive” treatments such as Graston, ART, ASTYM, Massage.
What is Happening?

Only theories exist:
- Increased blood flow to tissues.
- Balancing of the Qi.
- Stimulation of the Nervous System.
- Myofascial Release.

Probably the best explanations:
- Stimulation of the nervous system
  - Myofibrils
- Changes to the Fascia
- Increased microcirculation
- Thixotropy?
- Thomas Findley, MD, PhD: https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3091466/
- Jean-Claude Guimberteau, MD: Strolling Under the Skin
Fascial Connections

http://physicalalchemy.blogspot.com/2014/03/fascial-pec-minor-arm-linelung-meridian.html

Thomas Meyers – Anatomy Trains
Diagnostic Ultrasound

• Conclusion?
  • More research needs to be performed to understand the mechanism.
Precautions and Considerations

Contraindications
- Eczema, psoriasis or open skin lesions/abrasions/infections
- Pediatric patients
- Geriatric Patients
- Menstruating and pregnant females
- History of DVT

Other Considerations:
When you see the spots, ask a few questions:
- Home or professional treatment?
- Who was the provider and what is their training?
- What is your objective in receiving treatment?
The Take Away

- Myofascial Decompression may have some benefit to swimmers.
- Should only be performed by a licensed healthcare provider who is trained in Cupping or Myofascial Decompression.
  - ATC, Massage Therapist, Physical Therapist, Chiropractor, Acupuncturist, MD/DO, etc.
  - Home treatment should absolutely be discouraged.
- There should be clear objectives for using this therapy.
- Precautions should be taken to ensure safety.
Questions? – Please type in the Q & A section on your screen.
Additional Citations


4. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3825217/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3825217/)

5. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4488563/](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4488563/)