IN BRIEF

CONNECTIVE TISSUE DISEASES

Patients with systemic sclerosis (SSc) can experience facial symptoms that cause both functional loss and esthetic concerns. Evidence from a randomized controlled trial suggests that the combination of connective tissue massage, Kabat's technique (passive stretching), kinesitherapy and home-based exercises is more effective in the rehabilitation of this debilitating aspect of SSc than home-based exercises alone. All patients had improved mouth-opening at the end of treatment; however, only patients receiving the combined treatment improved on the Mouth Handicap in SSc (MHISS) scale. Furthermore, at 9 weeks post-treatment the improved mouth-opening was only maintained in individuals who had received the combined treatment.

Original article Maddali-Bongi, S. *et al*. The rehabilitation of facial involvement in systemic sclerosis: efficacy of the combination of connective tissue massage, Kabat's technique and kinesitherapy: a randomized controlled trial. *Rheumatol. Int.* doi:10.1007/s00296-010-1382-9

AUTOIMMUNITY

Female lupus-prone MRL/*lpr* mice (and BAX/BAK mice) that received the spleen tyrosine kinase (Syk) inhibitor R788 were protected against the development of skin disease and kidney disease compared with mice that did not receive R788. Furthermore, R788 could reduce the severity of established disease, as the investigators observed a reduction in splenomegaly and lymphadenopathy in these mice. This suggests that Syk inhibition might be a viable treatment strategy in patients with systemic lupus erythematosus, and these findings support the current interest in clinical trials of these agents.

Original article Deng, G. M. *et al*. Inhibition of spleen tyrosine kinase suppresses skin and kidney disease in lupus prone mice. *Arthritis Rheum.* doi:10.1002/art.27452

BONE DISEASE

Whole body vibration (WBV) does not enhance the effect of multipurpose exercise on lumbar bone mineral density in postmenopausal women, according to results from the randomized, controlled Erlangen Longitudinal Vibration Study (ELVIS). The researchers randomly assigned women to either a conventional training group (consisting of a variety of multipurpose exercises), a conventional training group including WBV, or a low-intensity wellness program. At 18 months of follow-up, no added benefit was observed from WBV with respect to lumbar bone mineral density. However, only women who received WBV had considerably less falls than those in the low-intensity wellness program.

Original article von Stengel, S. *et al*. Effects of whole body vibration on bone mineral density and falls: results of the randomized controlled ELVIS study with postmenopausal women. *Osteoporos. Int.* doi:10.1007/s00198-010-1215-4