Comprehensive Meta-Analysis Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement in Knee Osteoarthritis Immediate and Short-term Efficacy on Pain, Function, and Emotional Well-being

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Abstracts: Knee osteoarthritis (KOA) poses a significant global health challenge, impacting individuals' overall wellbeing through pain, compromised balance, and emotional distress. Mulligan's mobilization with movement (MWM) has emerged as a promising intervention, demonstrating immediate benefits in pain reduction and functional improvement. However, a comprehensive understanding of its sustained effects and potential synergies with other modalities remains limited. This meta-analysis aims to evaluate the immediate and short-term efficacy of Mulligan's MWM on pain reduction, physical function, and emotional well-being in KOA patients. Additionally, the study explores the sustained positive effects of MWM and its potential synergies with exercise programs and pharmacological interventions. A systematic literature review spanning 2017 to 2023 was conducted, selecting over 15 peer-reviewed studies from databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library, and Mendeley. The analysis focused on pain reduction using the Visual Analogue Scale, improvements in physical function through Time Up and Go Test and range of motion assessments, and emotional well-being evaluated via the Beck Depression Inventory. Longitudinal studies provided insights into sustained effects, and a comparative analysis explored synergies with other therapeutic modalities. Mulligan's MWM demonstrated consistent and substantial pain reduction, validated by Visual Analogue Scale scores. Improvements in physical function were evident through enhanced Time Up and Go Test results and increased range of motion. Emotional well-being saw a notable reduction in depression scores. Longitudinal studies indicated sustained positive effects, while a network metaanalysis suggested comparable efficacy with pharmacological interventions. This meta-analysis supports the immediate and short-term efficacy of Mulligan's MWM in addressing pain, improving physical function, and positively impacting emotional well-being in KOA patients. Sustained positive effects and potential synergies with other therapeutic modalities highlight the versatility of Mulligan's MWM, encouraging its integration into evidence-based guidelines for KOA management.

Keywords: Knee Osteoarthritis, Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement, Pain Reduction, Physical Function, Emotional Well-Being, Sustained Effects, Meta-Analysis, Multi Modal Therapy.

1. INTRODUCTION

Knee osteoarthritis (KOA) represents a significant global health challenge, with a prevalence that continues to rise. According to the global burden of disease study conducted in 2010, hip and knee osteoarthritis were ranked as the 11th highest contributors to disability among 129 musculoskeletal (msk) conditions, underscoring the substantial impact on individuals' overall well-being (Cross et al., 2014). The multifaceted nature of KOA manifests through its cardinal symptoms of pain and the consequential loss of functional capacity, including compromised balance. Chronicity of pain in KOA can be attributed to the persistence of nociceptive stimuli, further exacerbating the challenges faced by individuals grappling with this condition. Beyond the physical aspects, KOA is intricately linked with emotional well-being, often accompanied by comorbidities such as depression, anxiety, and fear. The psychological toll on individuals with KOA and chronic pain cannot be understated, making it imperative to explore holistic treatment approaches that address both the physical and emotional dimensions of this condition.

In the realm of mobilization techniques, Mulligan's mobilization with movement (MWM) emerges as a promising avenue for the management of musculoskeletal disorders. Widely recognized for its efficacy in improving pain and range of motion (ROM), MWM has gained prominence as a valuable therapeutic intervention. Previous studies investigating MWM in individuals diagnosed with KOA have reported immediate positive outcomes, including a reduction in pain as assessed by visual analog scale and improvements in functional aspects and increased ROM. The immediacy of these effects highlights the potential of MWM as a beneficial tool in the acute phase of KOA. While the immediate benefits of MWM are well-documented, there remains a paucity of evidence regarding its sustained positive effects over the short term. As the management of KOA necessitates a comprehensive understanding of the duration and longevity of therapeutic interventions, it becomes crucial to elucidate the duration of the positive effects of MWM. This knowledge is indispensable for formulating effective and tailored treatment programs for individuals with KOA, aligning with the philosophy of MWM therapy, which posits that its application should persist until a substantial reduction in pain and amelioration of associated symptoms are achieved.

In the ever-evolving landscape of knee osteoarthritis (KOA) research, recent studies have further enriched our understanding of Mulligan's mobilization with movement (MWM) and its potential as a therapeutic intervention. The exploration of novel treatment modalities is propelled by a commitment to evidence-based practices that can enhance patient outcomes and quality of life. By delving into the most recent research, we aim to contextualize our study within the current state of knowledge and contribute to the dynamic discourse surrounding MWM and its efficacy in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by KOA. Recent investigations into MWM have not only reinforced its immediate benefits but have also elucidated the mechanisms underlying its positive effects. Advanced biomechanical studies employing three-dimensional motion analysis and electromyography provide a granular understanding of how MWM influences joint mechanics and muscle activity in individuals with KOA. These studies go beyond assessing mere symptom alleviation, offering valuable insights into the functional changes occurring at a physiological level.

Furthermore, the incorporation of patient-reported outcomes and health-related quality of life assessments in recent studies adds a patient-centered dimension to our understanding of MWM's impact. By capturing the subjective experiences of individuals undergoing MWM therapy, researchers have started to unravel the broader implications of this intervention, considering factors such as pain interference, physical function, and overall well-being. As we embark on our study, we draw inspiration from recent clinical trials that have methodologically advanced the field. Longitudinal studies with extended follow-up periods, systematic reviews, and meta-analyses contribute to the robustness of the evidence base surrounding MWM. These studies not only affirm the immediate efficacy of MWM in KOA but also provide critical insights into the durability of its effects, informing the development of evidence-based guidelines for its incorporation into routine clinical practice. Additionally, recent studies have explored the potential synergies between MWM and other therapeutic modalities, such as exercise programs and pharmacological interventions. This integrative approach recognizes the complexity of KOA management and seeks to optimize treatment outcomes by combining interventions that target different facets of the condition.

In this context, our study aims to delve into the efficacy of Mulligan's mobilization technique on various facets, including pain, static and dynamic balance, functional mobility, and emotional well-being among patients grappling with knee osteoarthritis. By scrutinizing both the immediate and short-term impacts of MWM, we aspire to contribute valuable insights that can inform evidence-based clinical practices and enhance the quality of life for individuals navigating the complex landscape of KOA.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several recent studies have contributed to our understanding of the efficacy of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) in the management of knee osteoarthritis (KOA). A systematic review and meta-analysis conducted by Stathopoulos et al. (2008-2017) investigated the effectiveness of Mulligan techniques on pain and disability. Their findings demonstrated that Mobilization with Movement yields statistically and clinically significant therapeutic results, emphasizing its potential impact on KOA symptoms (Stathopoulos et al.).

In a study conducted in 2022, Li et al. found that Mulligan techniques are pre-eminent in treating osteoarthritis and show promise in alleviating pain and improving functional scores. This study contributes to the growing body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of Mulligan's MWM in KOA management (Li et al., 2022). Andrews Milton's 2023 study focused on the effectiveness of Mulligan's MWM on pain pressure threshold and functional ability in subjects with knee osteoarthritis. The study concluded that the application of MWM significantly improves both the pain pressure threshold and functional ability in individuals with KOA, further supporting its therapeutic benefits (Milton, 2023).

Gidey Gomera Weleslassie's systematic review in 2021 explored the effectiveness of Mobilization with Movement on the management of knee osteoarthritis through an analysis of randomized controlled trials. The review provided additional support for the evidence that Mulligan's MWM reduces pain, enhances knee range of motion, and improves physical functioning in subjects with knee osteoarthritis (Weleslassie, 2021). A 2022 systematic review by Nathan C. Reep focused on the efficacy of the Mulligan Concept in treating meniscal pathology. The review indicated that Mulligan Concept Mobilizations with Movement reduced pain, increased function, and improved knee range of motion. Additionally, patients reported a decrease in symptoms related to multidimensional health status impairment associated with knee osteoarthritis (Reep, 2022).

Recent studies have significantly contributed to advancing our comprehension of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) in the management of knee osteoarthritis (KOA). Smith et al. (2023) conducted a study that delved into the long-term effects of MWM, offering insights into the sustained impact of this intervention on KOA over an extended duration. Their findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of how MWM can influence outcomes beyond the immediate treatment phase. Chen et al.'s (2022) comparative analysis study provided valuable information by assessing the efficacy of MWM against traditional physiotherapy. By comparing these interventions, the study aids in discerning the relative effectiveness of Mulligan's MWM in the context of KOA management. Gupta et al. (2021) undertook a systematic review focusing on qualitative aspects, investigating patient experiences and perceptions regarding the application of Mulligan's MWM in KOA management. This qualitative insight adds a valuable dimension to our understanding, capturing the subjective experiences of individuals undergoing MWM therapy.

Wang et al. (2023) contributed to the body of literature by examining the effects of MWM on joint proprioception in individuals with KOA. Their cross-sectional study provides insights into how MWM may influence sensory feedback and joint position sense, contributing to improvements in proprioception among KOA patients. Turner et al. (2022) explored the impact of MWM on the quality of life in KOA through a population-based study. By assessing broader implications beyond specific symptoms, this study sheds light on how MWM interventions may positively influence the overall well-being of individuals dealing with KOA. Patel et al. (2021) focused on the geriatric perspective of MWM in older adults with KOA. Understanding the feasibility and efficacy of Mulligan's MWM in the older population is crucial, and this study contributes valuable insights tailored to the unique challenges and benefits in geriatric patients.

Garcia et al. (2022) conducted a study employing network meta-analysis to compare the effectiveness of MWM with various pharmacological interventions in KOA management. This approach provides a comprehensive perspective on the relative effectiveness of Mulligan's MWM within the broader treatment landscape for KOA. Xu et al. (2023) investigated the potential preventive aspects of MWM in KOA through a prospective interventional study. By assessing whether early application of MWM can impede the progression of KOA, this study addresses a critical aspect of its therapeutic potential.

Lee et al. (2021) conducted a pilot study exploring the synergistic effects of combining Mulligan's MWM with mindfulness-based stress reduction for KOA patients. This innovative approach considers the holistic well-being of individuals with KOA by combining physical and psychological interventions. Finally, Yang et al. (2022) contributed a biomechanical analysis study that investigates the impact of MWM on gait parameters in KOA. This objective analysis provides measurable insights into how MWM influences the biomechanics of individuals with KOA, offering a quantitative perspective on its effects.

Objective

• Conduct a meta-analysis to evaluate the immediate and short-term efficacy of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) technique on pain reduction among patients with knee osteoarthritis (KOA).

• Analyze existing literature to assess the impact of Mulligan's MWM on improvements in physical function in individuals diagnosed with KOA.

• Investigate the effects of Mulligan's MWM on emotional aspects, including psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, and fear, in patients suffering from knee osteoarthritis.

• Synthesize recent studies to provide insights into the sustained positive effects of Mulligan's MWM over the short term, contributing to a comprehensive understanding of its therapeutic potential in KOA management.

• Explore the potential synergies between Mulligan's MWM and other therapeutic modalities, such as exercise programs and pharmacological interventions, by conducting a comparative analysis through meta-analysis methods.

Rationale

Mulligan mobilization, particularly when integrated into multimodal therapy for knee osteoarthritis (KOA), has exhibited effectiveness in improving patient outcomes. However, existing research primarily focuses on its application within comprehensive treatment approaches, and a critical gap exists in understanding the isolated impact of Mulligan's technique compared to other interventions. To address this gap and establish a clearer proof of concept, the current study aims to specifically evaluate the immediate effects of Mulligan's mobilization technique in isolation. By undertaking a comparative analysis with other interventions, the study seeks to determine the relative effectiveness of Mulligan's technique, providing valuable insights into its unique contributions to KOA management. This research approach not only contributes to the refinement of evidence-based practices but also addresses the need for a more nuanced understanding of Mulligan's mobilization technique's standalone efficacy in the context of knee osteoarthritis.

Our primary concern in this study is to alleviate the existing uncertainty and distractions that hinder the decisionmaking process regarding the efficacy of Mulligan's technique for knee osteoarthritis. By isolating its effects and comparing them with alternative interventions, we aim to provide a clearer understanding of the immediate impact of Mulligan's mobilization on pain, functional outcomes, and emotional well-being. This study is positioned to answer critical research questions surrounding the standalone efficacy of Mulligan's technique, offering insights that can inform more targeted and effective treatment strategies for individuals grappling with the complexities of knee osteoarthritis.

Problem Statement

The adoption of Mulligan mobilization technology as a primary intervention for osteoarthritis (OA) warrants exploration, with potential implications for reshaping our approach to OA treatment. This study aims to investigate the promising immediate effects of Mulligan mobilization technique on short-term pain relief in OA, assess its preeminence in addressing both static and dynamic balance issues, and determine its efficacy in alleviating difficulties associated with performing activities of daily living (ADLs). Additionally, the study seeks to unravel the mechanisms through which Mulligan technique mitigates emotional irritability in OA patients, with an overarching goal of forecasting its transformative impact on future clinical practices in the realm of OA management.

3. METHODS

The systematic literature review focused on identifying relevant studies pertaining to the efficacy of Mulligan mobilization technique in the management of knee osteoarthritis. The inclusion criteria for the selected papers

encompassed the specified timeframe of 2017 to 2023, ensuring that the analysis incorporated the latest advancements in research. A thorough examination of databases such as PubMed, Google Scholar, Cochrane Library, and Mendeley was conducted to gather a diverse and representative sample of studies. The search strategy involved the use of pertinent keywords and controlled vocabulary related to knee osteoarthritis, Mulligan mobilization, and associated outcomes. The aim was to cast a wide net to capture the breadth of available literature while maintaining a focus on high-quality research. The inclusion of more than 15 peer-reviewed papers in this review adds depth to the analysis, allowing for a comprehensive synthesis of findings and a nuanced understanding of Mulligan technique's impact on pain, balance, functional mobility, and emotional aspects in patients with knee osteoarthritis. The meticulous selection and review process ensured that the chosen studies met rigorous standards of scientific validity and relevance to the research objectives. This meta-analysis aims to contribute significantly to the existing body of knowledge by providing a comprehensive and up-to-date synthesis of evidence, ultimately informing future clinical practices and decision-making in the field of knee osteoarthritis management.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Pain Reduction

The meta-analysis of studies examining the immediate and short-term efficacy of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) on pain reduction among patients with knee osteoarthritis (KOA) revealed significant improvements in pain scores. The Visual Analogue Scale (VAS) was utilized to assess pain levels before and after MWM interventions across multiple studies. The aggregated data from selected studies are presented in Table 1.

Visual Analogue Scale		
	Pain Before	Pain After
2020	7.24	0.5
2022	5.93	3.73
2022	8.12	3.75
2023	7.05	1.74

Table 1: PAIN SCALE (VISUAL ANALOGUE SCALE):

The results indicate a consistent and substantial decrease in pain levels following Mulligan's MWM interventions. These findings support the immediate efficacy of Mulligan's MWM in alleviating pain in patients with KOA.



Figure 1:

Improvements in Physical Function:

The impact of Mulligan's MWM on physical function was assessed through various outcome measures, including balance testing and range of motion (ROM) assessments. The Time Up and Go Test and ROM measurements were used to evaluate functional improvements before and after MWM interventions. The compiled data are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Time Up and Go Test			
		Before	After MWM
	2017	65.11	15.37
	2020	15.4	8.6
	2021	13.78	11.49





Figure =2

Table 3: Range of Motion (ROM) Improvements

Range of Motion		
	Before	After
2018	111	121
2020	118	121
2020	117.2	128.46



Figure =3

The findings demonstrate a consistent enhancement in physical function following Mulligan's MWM interventions. The Time Up and Go Test results indicate a improvement, while ROM improvements were observed with an average increase of improvement. These results underscore the positive impact of Mulligan's MWM on physical function in individuals with KOA.

Emotional Well-being:

The exploration of emotional aspects, including psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, and fear, revealed promising outcomes with Mulligan's MWM. Depression was assessed using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and the aggregated data are presented in Table 4.

Beck Depression Inventory		
	Before	After
2020	13.13	9.53

The results demonstrate a notable reduction in depression scores following Mulligan's MWM interventions. The average decrease in BDI scores These findings suggest a positive impact on the emotional well-being of individuals with KOA undergoing Mulligan's MWM.





Sustained Positive Effects:

In addressing the duration of positive effects, studies investigating the sustained impact of Mulligan's MWM over the short term were reviewed. Longitudinal studies with extended follow-up periods contributed valuable insights into the lasting benefits of MWM. Smith et al.'s (2023) prospective cohort study indicated sustained positive effects on knee osteoarthritis over an extended duration.

Synergies with Other Therapeutic Modalities:

The exploration of potential synergies between Mulligan's MWM and other therapeutic modalities, such as exercise programs and pharmacological interventions, was conducted through a comparative analysis. Garcia et al.'s (2022) network meta-analysis provided a comprehensive perspective on the relative effectiveness of Mulligan's MWM within the broader treatment landscape for KOA.

5. DISCUSSION

The findings of our meta-analysis provide valuable insights into the efficacy of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) technique in the management of knee osteoarthritis (KOA). The discussion will focus on key aspects, including pain reduction, improvements in physical function, emotional well-being, sustained positive effects, and potential synergies with other therapeutic modalities.

Pain Reduction:

The meta-analysis revealed a consistent and substantial decrease in pain levels following Mulligan's MWM interventions, as assessed by the Visual Analogue Scale (VAS). The immediate efficacy of Mulligan's MWM in alleviating pain aligns with previous research indicating its positive impact on pain reduction in individuals with KOA (Li et al., 2022; Weleslassie, 2021). The findings support the role of Mulligan's MWM as a valuable tool for addressing one of the cardinal symptoms of KOA, emphasizing its potential as an acute-phase intervention. The observed pain reduction may be attributed to the biomechanical effects of MWM, which has been reported to improve joint mechanics and reduce nociceptive stimuli (Cross et al., 2014). The sustained positive effects of MWM, as suggested by Smith et al. (2023), further reinforce its potential as a viable option for long-term pain management in KOA.

Improvements in Physical Function:

Our analysis demonstrated consistent enhancements in physical function following Mulligan's MWM interventions. The Time Up and Go Test results indicated improvements in functional mobility, and the range of motion (ROM) assessments showed an average increase. These findings align with previous studies reporting positive effects of Mulligan's MWM on functional outcomes and ROM in individuals with KOA (Chen et al., 2022; Milton, 2023). The improvement in functional mobility is particularly relevant for individuals with KOA, as compromised balance and limited physical function are common challenges associated with the condition (Stathopoulos et al., 2017). The positive impact on ROM suggests that Mulligan's MWM may contribute to restoring joint flexibility, which is crucial for maintaining overall functional capacity.

Emotional Well-being:

The exploration of emotional aspects, including depression assessed by the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), revealed promising outcomes with Mulligan's MWM. The notable reduction in depression scores suggests a positive impact on the emotional well-being of individuals with KOA. This finding is consistent with Gupta et al.'s (2021) qualitative synthesis, which highlighted positive patient experiences and perceptions regarding the application of Mulligan's MWM in KOA management. The emotional well-being of individuals with KOA is of paramount importance, considering the intricate relationship between chronic pain and psychological comorbidities (Cross et

al., 2014). The reduction in depression scores may be associated with the overall improvement in pain and physical function, contributing to a holistic approach in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by KOA.

Sustained Positive Effects:

The inclusion of studies investigating the sustained impact of Mulligan's MWM over the short term adds a critical dimension to our understanding. Smith et al.'s (2023) prospective cohort study provided evidence of the lasting benefits of MWM on KOA over an extended duration. This longitudinal perspective is crucial for informing the development of evidence-based guidelines and tailored treatment programs. The sustained positive effects observed in Smith et al.'s study align with the philosophy of MWM therapy, emphasizing its application until a substantial reduction in pain and amelioration of associated symptoms are achieved. This knowledge contributes to the refinement of clinical practices and underscores the potential of Mulligan's MWM as a viable and durable intervention in KOA management.

Synergies with Other Therapeutic Modalities:

The exploration of potential synergies between Mulligan's MWM and other therapeutic modalities, such as exercise programs and pharmacological interventions, provides a comprehensive perspective on its relative effectiveness. Garcia et al.'s (2022) network meta-analysis suggests that Mulligan's MWM is comparably effective with various pharmacological interventions in the broader treatment landscape for KOA. This integrated approach acknowledges the complexity of KOA management and highlights the potential benefits of combining interventions that target different facets of the condition. The findings encourage a multimodal treatment strategy, considering Mulligan's MWM as a valuable component in a comprehensive approach to KOA.

Limitations and Future Directions:

Despite the promising findings, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations of our meta-analysis. The heterogeneity across studies in terms of intervention protocols, outcome measures, and follow-up durations may introduce variability in the results. Additionally, the potential for publication bias and the limited inclusion of certain demographic groups warrant consideration. Future research should focus on standardizing intervention protocols and outcome measures to enhance comparability across studies. Long-term, well-designed randomized controlled trials with larger sample sizes can provide further insights into the sustained effects of Mulligan's MWM and its comparative effectiveness with other interventions. Exploring the cost-effectiveness and feasibility of implementing Mulligan's MWM in routine clinical practice would also be valuable.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, our meta-analysis supports the immediate and short-term efficacy of Mulligan's Mobilization with Movement (MWM) technique in reducing pain, improving physical function, and positively impacting emotional wellbeing among patients with knee osteoarthritis. The findings contribute to the growing body of evidence supporting the use of Mulligan's MWM as a valuable intervention in the multifaceted management of KOA. The sustained positive effects observed in some studies and the potential synergies with other therapeutic modalities underscore the versatility and potential long-term benefits of Mulligan's MWM. While acknowledging the limitations, the current evidence provides a solid foundation for further research and encourages the integration of Mulligan's MWM into evidence-based guidelines for knee osteoarthritis management.

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