

## **Is Tai Chi effective in the management of Parkinson's disease?**

### **A. Milert**

*Department of Physiotherapy, University of Physical Education in Krakow, Poland*

Complex movement disorders of patients with Parkinson's disease (PD) require comprehensive and multi-directional health enhancement procedures. Besides current methods of physiotherapy adapted to the stages of PD, the forms of exercises until recently considered unconventional are gradually included. Among others these include Tai Chi derived from Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM). Tai Chi is based on natural, smooth, harmonious movements of the trunk and limbs combined with physical and mental relaxation. This form of exercise has been practiced for many centuries among the elderly in China - for preventive and therapeutic purposes. Clinical studies conducted so far confirm the beneficial effects of Tai Chi on improving balance, coordination, muscle strength, gait and reducing the risk of falls of the elderly. The presentation will include the main assumptions of Tai Chi practice and conclusions from the review of the current scientific literature regarding the effectiveness of Tai Chi of patients with PD. The results of the research on the impact of Tai Chi on muscle strength, body posture, spatio-temporal gait parameters, balance and coordination will be discussed. Methodological guidelines for individual and group Tai Chi exercises of PD patients will also be presented, depending on the stage of the disease. Due to the growing popularity of this form of movement among the elderly as well as the lack of reports of adverse impact on the practitioners, it is worth encouraging the inclusion of Tai Chi as an attractive, complementary form of therapy for traditional methods of physiotherapy.