Thermal biofeedback for primary Raynaud's phenomenon: a review of the literature.

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The clinical presentation of primary Raynaud's phenomenon (RP) derives from various pathogenic triggers. The use of thermal biofeedback (TBF) may be of benefit in reducing the severity and frequency of attacks. This article summarizes the relevant research regarding the pathophysiology of primary RP and mechanism of TBF for RP. Systematic reviews of the efficacy of TBF for RP and treatment guidelines for clinicians are provided. The panel concludes that the level of evidence for TBF efficacy is categorized as Level IV: efficacious. The rationale, based on three randomized controlled trials conducted in independent laboratories, demonstrated "superiority or equivalence" of treatments that include TBF. However, randomly controlled trials (RCT) with positive clinical outcomes tended to be small. A large RCT with negative results did not effectively teach handwarming skills. Procedures for reviewing and rating of the levels of evidence of efficacy of studies was based on the Template for Developing Guidelines for the Evaluation of the Clinical Efficacy of Psychophysiological Interventions developed by the joint task force of the AAPB and the Society for Neuronal Regulation (SNR).