Whole Body Cryotherapy (WBCT) is a non-invasive method of applying cold for healing purposes. However, it cannot be compared in the physical, physiological and clinical sense with any other physiotherapeutic treatment using cold to cool down the whole body. WBCT is the application of a temperature lower than –1200°C to the outer surface of the body, for a period of 2–3 minutes, in order to evoke and make use of physiological reactions to cold. The body’s positive response to cryotherapy is a supportive factor in the treatment of the underlying disease of the locomotor system and facilitates mobility treatment (kinesiotherapy), as well as being used for the biological renewal of sports professionals.

**Application of WBCT:**
- rheumatology
- physiotherapy
- sports medicine
- neurology
- biological renewal

**Main therapeutic effects of the WBCT:**
- increases the pain threshold
- increases muscle strength
- reduces muscle spasticity
- decreases inflammatory activity
- shortens recovery period after sport traumas

**Application of the WBCT in professional sport:**
- treatment of acute sporting trauma
- treatment of chronic overload trauma
- complementary treatment after reconstitution operations, and tendon, ligament, muscles and bone operations
- biological regeneration and chronic traumas disease prevention, during intensive training and the preparation for championships.

**WBCT** is widely used in sport. It eliminates the negative effects of physical exercise, as well as helping sports professionals prepare for more intense training. WBCT can be used as part of a training programme to enhance sporting performance. Cryochambers have already been installed in a few Olympic sports centres, confirming the acceptance of WBCT by trainers and sports professionals.
Application of the WBCT in medical treatment:

- comprehensive therapy of rheumatoid diseases, soft tissue rheumatoid diseases and degenerative changes
- primary and secondary degenerative diseases of the motor organs
- reduction of muscle spasticity in the process of neurological rehabilitation
- sleeping disorders and depression

Contra-indications for WBCT:

- cold intolerance
- cryoglobulinemia
- cryofibrinogemia
- cold urticaria
- purulent and gangrenous skin lesions
- open wounds and ulcerations
- hypothyroidism
- local disorders of blood supply
- cancer
- blood circulation impairment
- taking some drugs, particularly neuroleptic drugs and alcohol
- claustrophobia

Every person undergoing WBCT must wear sports shorts or a swimsuit (women), clogs, warm knee-length socks, preferably woollen, a scarf to protect the ears and a mask to protect the mouth and nose. People inside the treatment chamber can stay still or walk in the deep cold. WBCT never exceeds three minutes. The treatment should be followed by approximately 30 minutes of physical exercise to increase and consolidate the beneficial effects of WBCT, or just to warm up the body.

A medical consultation is required prior to cryotherapy treatment, including a medical interview about past and current diseases (and prescribed medicine), which can constitute a contra-indication for cryotherapy, as well as questions about cold tolerance, a physical examination including heart and lungs auscultation, palpable examination of abdominal cavity, measurement of blood pressure and heart rate, electrocardiographic and neurological examinations.

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