



## Canadian Medical Journal Extols Benefits of Infrared Saunas

by the Health Experts at Healthy Living Magazine

Richard Beever, M.D., C.C.F.P., C.I., a Clinical Assistant Professor in the Department of Family Practice at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, has done health consumers a great deal of good recently with the publication of a major review article on the health benefits of far-infrared sauna (FIRS, also known as infrared) therapy. The article came out in the July 2009 issue of *Canadian Family Physician*.

He extolled the benefits for heart health. “Three papers support the use of infrared therapy for individuals with coronary risk factors, which traditionally include hypercholesterolemia, hypertension, diabetes mellitus, obesity, and smoking.”

“There is preliminary but high-quality support of infrared therapy for treatment of New York Heart Association class II and III congestive heart failure and systolic hypertension...”

But besides these studies, Dr. Beever found, “Additional studies offer evidence of other possible benefits of infrared therapy.”

### **Chronic pain**

Dr. Beever notes, “There is fair preliminary support for infrared therapy's role in reducing chronic pain.” A research team studied 46 patients with chronic pain. All 46 patients received 4 weeks of multidisciplinary inpatient treatment; 22 of the subjects also had 15-minute daily infrared sauna sessions during those 4 weeks. After 2 years, those in the sauna group were significantly more likely to have returned to work (77 percent vs. 50 percent) and to have improved sleep scores, and trended toward greater improvement in pain and anger scores. The authors suggested that infrared sauna therapy might be promising for the treatment of chronic pain, although these results also indicate overall improved health and well-being. “The study used validated tools to measure pain, depression, and anger, and subject groups were well matched,” said Dr. Beever in commenting on its quality.

## **Reproductive system**

But here's where some really interesting news came out of his article. This is brand new research; the statement by the physician is bold: "Infrared sauna use is safe and effective for increasing lactation in breastfeeding mothers, and infrared treatment does not appear to be harmful during pregnancy." Does this mean that women who are breastfeeding will find infrared therapy useful? That's so, according to the *American Medical Journal* (2001;110[2]:118–26).

No adverse effects were found (or reported) in any of the studies reviewed for this article.