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Effects of Physical Exercise on Patients with Depression

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Abstract

Objective: To explore and describe the relationship between physical activity and overall symptoms of patients diagnosed with depression.

Design: Quasi-experimental, Descriptive

Setting: High Plains Mental Health Center, Hays, KS

Participants: Individuals diagnosed with depression

Results/Conclusions: Pending results and data collection.

Introduction

Depression is a disabling mental illness that is very common amongst adults worldwide, affecting roughly 121 million people (Rimer et al., 2012). Physical exercise is widely accepted among patients with depression and is a growing treatment in regards to this disease (Aidan, Michael, Glyn, John, Adrian, & Turner, 2012). This study will explore how physical exercise compared to lack of physical exercise affects the symptoms of depression in patients with a diagnosis of depression.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of physical exercise on patients with depression.

Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on Dorothy Orem’s Self-Care Deficit Theory (Alligood, 2018). This theory includes elements of self-care that are required for life processes and the maintenance of human function. This framework applies to our study because exercise is considered a form of self-care and promotes good physical and mental health (Alligood, 2018).

Methodology

Research Design: Quasi-Experimental, Descriptive

Interventions: Patients with depression at High Plains Mental Health Center will be informed of the study. Those who choose to participate will be randomly split into a control group and an experimental group. An exercise regimen will be implemented in those in the experimental group, consisting of moderate aerobic exercise five days per week for six weeks with a heart rate of at least 120 for 30 minutes per day. Symptoms of depression will be measured at the end of each week.

Independent Variable: Moderate aerobic physical exercise.

Dependent Variable: Self-reported effects on symptoms of depression, including a decrease in overall fatigue, anxiety, and sadness. Patients will express their symptoms using a visual analogue scale from 0-5 with 0 being no symptoms and 5 being the worst of symptoms.

Proposed Research Question:

In patients diagnosed with depression, how does physical exercise influence their symptoms?

Literature Sources

According to Rimer, et al., (2012), while depression is commonly treated with antidepressants, research now suggests that there is a rising interest in the effects of alternative therapies such as physical exercise in means of treating depression symptoms. In this study, 28 trials were conducted with a total of 1101 participants. Furthermore, this study included the comparison of exercise with either waiting list or placebo. At the conclusion of the study, it was found that exercise indeed seemed to improve the symptoms of depression seen in the participants (Rimer, et al., 2012).

Discussion

Implications For Nursing

If physical exercise is found to successfully reduce the symptoms of depression, then it could be implemented in various health facilities as a treatment option. Nurses would have the responsibility of educating patients of the importance of adhering to their exercise regimen.

Conclusion

Pending analysis data collection. This study indicates that physical exercise reduces the symptoms of depression. For future research, it is recommended that more research needs to be conducted on a larger scale and include a variety of different populations in order to become conclusive.

References


