

Attitude and Perception of Multiple Sclerosis Patients toward Exercise

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Abstract : Introduction: Contrary to the common belief that physical training for multiple sclerosis (MS) patients might exacerbate fatigue and provoke other symptoms of the illness, it is now widely accepted that exercise can be actually beneficial in terms of activities of daily living, reduced fatigue, and improved quality of life. The aim of this study was to assess the attitude of MS patients toward exercise. Methodology: 112 MS patients who were recruited from the local community participated in this study. We utilised a self-developed questionnaire targeting attitudes and perceptions of MS patients towards physical exercise. The questionnaire was piloted and tested for validity and reliability. Results: Before being diagnosed with MS, 49.9% of our MS patients' respondents used to engage in different types of physical activities and sports, namely aerobics/walking (35.3%), stretching exercise (18.7%), and strengthening exercise (11.4%). After being diagnosed with MS, 40.8% of our sample showed determination to remain physically active. The interest in sports activities was consistent after the diagnoses with MS and included aerobics/walking (33.8%), stretching exercise (22.6%), and strengthening exercise (19.7%). Discussion: The Kuwaiti respondents thought that lack of encouragement was the main reason for them not exercise. Aptly put, if they try to exercise, they will be discouraged by the loved ones lest the worse happens. On the other side, British patients are generally aware of the benefits of physical and mental health-promoting activities; they can seek help from a wide range of professionals and are more actively involved in the management of their condition. It is therefore important that the benefits of physical activity are promoted among MS patients, and that attitude towards MS and MS patients is changed through education.

Keywords : perception, multiple sclerosis, exercise, physical training

Conference Title : ICHMSBR 2021 : International Conference on Human Movement Science and Biomechanics Research

Conference Location : Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Conference Dates : March 22-23, 2021