

Osteoporosis and Weight Gain - Two Major Concerns for Menopausal Women - a Physiotherapy Perspective

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Abstract : The aim of this narrative review is to highlight the impact of menopause on osteoporosis and weight gain. The review also aims to summarize physiotherapeutic strategies to combat the same. A thorough literature search was conducted using electronic databases like MEDline, PUBmed, Highwire Press, PUBmed Central for English language studies that included search terms like menopause, osteoporosis, obesity, weight gain, exercises, physical activity, physiotherapy strategies from the year 2000 till date. Out of 157 studies that included metanalyses, critical reviews and randomized clinical trials, a total of 84 were selected that met the inclusion criteria. Prevalence of obesity is increasing world - wide and is reaching epidemic proportions even in the menopausal women. Prevalence of abdominal obesity is almost double than that general obesity with rates in the US with 65.5% in women ages 40-59 years and 73.8 in women aged 60 years or more. Physical activities and exercises play a vital role in prevention and treatment of osteoporosis and weight gain related to menopause that aim to boost the general well-being and any symptoms brought about by natural body changes. Endurance exercises lasting about 30 minutes /day for 5 days/ week has shown to decrease weight and prevent weight gain. In addition, strength training with at least 8 exercises of 8-12 repetitions working for whole body and for large muscle groups has shown to result positive outcomes. Hot flashes can be combatted through yogic breathing and relaxation exercises. Prevention of fall strategies and resistance training are key to treat diagnosed cases of osteoporosis related to menopause. One to three sets with five to eight repetitions of four to six weight bearing exercises have shown positive results. Menopause marks an important time for women to evaluate their risk of obesity and osteoporosis. It is known fact that bone benefit from exercises are lost when training is stopped, hence, practicing bone smart habits and strict adherence to recommended physical activity programs are recommended which are enjoyable, safe and effective.

Keywords : menopause, osteoporosis, obesity, weight gain, exercises, physical activity, physiotherapy strategies

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