

## Effects of Physical Activity Used as Treatment in Community Mental Health Services

**Authors :** John Olav Bjornestad, Bjorn Tore Johansen

**Abstract :** The number of people suffering from mental illnesses is increasing, and such illness is currently one of the major causes of disability and poor health. The reason for this is most likely a lack of physical activity. The purpose of this study was to discover if physical activity was an effective mode of treatment for psychiatric patients at an out-patient treatment facility. The study included an exploration of whether or not patients having physical activity included as an integral part of their treatment (to a greater degree than do patients who are physically inactive) would achieve 1) an improvement in their physical condition 2) a reduction in symptomatic pressure and 3) an increase in their health-related quality of life. The intervention period lasted a total of 12 weeks. The training group completed a minimum of 2 training sessions per week with an intensity of 60-75% of maximum heart rate. The participants' health-related quality of life (SF-36), symptomatic pressure (SCL-90-R) and physical condition (UKK-walking test) were measured before and after intervention. Twenty participants were pre-tested, and out of this initial group, nine patients completed the intervention program and participated thereafter in post-testing. The results showed that participants on average improved their physical condition, reduced their symptomatic pressure and increased their health-related quality of life over the course of the intervention period. The training group experienced significant changes in their symptomatic pressure (the anxiety dimension) and health-related quality of life (the mental health dimension) from the pre-testing stage to the post-testing one. Furthermore, there was a significant connection between symptomatic pressure and health-related quality of life. The patients who were admitted to the psychiatric out-patient clinic were in a physical condition that was significantly poorer than that of persons of the same age in the remainder of the population. Experiences from the study and the relatively large defection from it demonstrate that there is a great need for close follow-up of psychiatric patients' physical activity levels when physical activity and lifestyle changes are included as part of their treatment program.

**Keywords :** health-related quality, mental health, physical activity, physical condition

**Conference Title :** ICMHT 2016 : International Conference on Mental Health and Treatment

**Conference Location :** Havana, Cuba

**Conference Dates :** November 24-25, 2016