E-Poster

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Can Exercise Training Improve Depression, Anxiety, Fatigue, and Quality of Life in Patients With Multiple Sclerosis?

Topic: Exercise

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BACKGROUND

Multiple sclerosis (MS) is a chronic autoimmune demyelinating disorder of the central nervous system, characterized by a wide range of symptoms, including depression, anxiety, and fatigue. These neuropsychiatric and physical symptoms are strongly associated with reduced quality of life (QoL) and functional disability. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of exercise training in reducing symptoms of depression, anxiety, and fatigue, as well as improving QoL in patients with MS.

METHODS

A retrospective study was conducted in the Department of Physical and Rehabilitation medicine at the Ibn Rochd University Hospital in Casablanca Morocco between December 2022 to December 2023. 48 MS patients who participated in an exercise training program were analyzed. The program included three weekly sessions of 30 minutes, combining aerobic and muscle-strengthening exercises. Symptoms of depression and anxiety were assessed using the HADS (Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale), QoL with the SF-36 (Short Form Health Survey), and fatigue with the FSS (Fatigue Severity Scale).

RESULTS

The mean age of participants was 48 years (± 10 years), with 60% being women. After six months, a significant reduction in depression scores (from 12.5 to 7.3; $p < 0.001$) and anxiety scores (from 10.8 to 6.3; $p < 0.01$) was observed, with clinically significant improvement in 75% and 70% of patients, respectively. Fatigue also decreased significantly (from 5.8 to 4.2; $p < 0.05$), with improvement reported in 65% of patients. Quality of life improved in both physical (from 45.2 to 58.7; $p < 0.05$) and mental (from 38.9 to 52.4; $p < 0.01$) domains of the SF-36. Subgroup analyses showed greater benefits among women (reduction of 5.5 points for depression vs. 4.8 in men) and patients under 50 years of age (reduction of 1.8 points for fatigue vs. 1.4 in those over 50).

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that exercise training significantly reduces depression, anxiety, and fatigue while improving QoL in MS patients. These findings support its integration as a key non-pharmacological intervention in MS management.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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