# Exercise may improve complications of deep vein thrombosis

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A pilot trial showed that a six-month exercise training program designed to increase leg strength, leg flexibility and overall fitness may improve post-thrombotic syndrome, a frequent, chronic complication of deep vein thrombosis, states a research article in *CMAJ* (*Canadian Medical Association Journal*).

Chronic post-thrombotic syndrome develops in up to one half of patients with deep vein thrombosis (DVT). These patients can experience leg pain, heaviness, swelling, water retention, hyperpigmentation and varicose veins and leg ulcers.

"Given that effective treatments are lacking, new approaches to managing post-thrombotic syndrome are needed," writes Dr. Susan Kahn, Professor of Medicine at McGill University, Division of Internal Medicine and Centre for Clinical Epidemiology, Jewish General Hospital, Montreal and coauthors. "We performed a pilot trial to obtain data on the effectiveness of exercise training to treat post-thrombotic syndrome and to assess the feasibility of performing a multicentre study to address this question."

Of 95 patients with post-thrombotic syndrome, 69 were eligible, 43 consented and were randomized, and 39 completed the study.

"The findings of our small trial should be interpreted with caution and require confirmation in a larger study," write the authors. "As most of our patients were young, well-educated and active, the results obtained

may not be generalizable to patients with post-thrombotic syndrome at other centres."

The authors conclude that exercise training may improve post-thrombotic syndrome and should be evaluated as a treatment in further clinical trials.

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