

Physiotherapy beneficial for people with Parkinson's disease in the short term

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(Medical Xpress)—Results from a systematic review and meta-analysis led by the University of Birmingham in the UK suggest that physiotherapy benefits people with Parkinson's disease in the short term (

The management of Parkinson's disease has traditionally centred on drug treatment, however, there has been increasing support for the inclusion of rehabilitation therapies, such as [physiotherapy](#), to supplement pharmacological and neurosurgical treatment.

Dr Claire Tomlinson, from the University of Birmingham Clinical Trials Unit, and colleagues selected 39 [randomised controlled trials](#) including 1827 participants for review. The review included trials assessing a variety of different physiotherapy methods used to treat participants including general physiotherapy, exercise, treadmill training and dance.

Of the 18 potential physiotherapy outcomes assessed, physiotherapy resulted in improvements in nine areas. For three outcomes (gait speed, the Berg balance scale and a clinician-rated disability scale) there is existing evidence to suggest that these improvements may be clinically meaningful to people with Parkinson's disease. For example, [participants](#) demonstrated that with physiotherapy intervention they were able to walk faster or maintain their balance better compared to no intervention.

Dr Tomlinson, said: "This study indicates that physiotherapy could

provide clinically meaningful benefits in the short term for people with [Parkinson's disease](#). Further improved studies are needed; these will shed more light on how beneficial physiotherapy can be for patients in the longer term. Once a larger and better quality of evidence is achieved, there might be scope for a recommendation for change in practice to be made."

More information: Physiotherapy intervention in Parkinson's disease: systematic review and meta-analysis, published by the *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) 2012;345(7872).

Provided by University of Birmingham

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