

Exercise with a physiotherapist helps people with depression

June 12 2015

Exercise has a positive effect on depression – so reveals a dissertation written at the Sahlgrenska Academy.

In a study at the Sahlgrenska Academy, the researcher evaluated exercise as add-on therapy to medicating with antidepressants. The study divided 62 individuals with diagnosed [clinical depression](#) into three groups, in which two participated in two different types of exercise with a physiotherapist twice a week for 10 weeks while the third, the control group, did not participate in systematic exercise.

Person-centered approach

The exercise in the study was based on a person-centered approach, where the exercises were adapted to the participant's needs, expectations and previous experiences.

The experiments showed that people who participated in exercise aimed at increasing their physical fitness clearly improved their mental health compared with the [control group](#).

Reduced depressive symptoms

Even participants who were coached in basal body awareness reduced their [depressive symptoms](#), although not as significantly.

"In our follow-up interviews for the study, participants spoke about how they felt alive again and became more active. One woman expressed this to mean that the workout "kick starts my body and helps me get the strength to crawl out of this cocoon that I am in," reports Ph.D. student Louise Danielsson, who reviews the studies in her dissertation.

More social contacts

The studies show that the participants who exercised felt that they had the strength to do more at home and engaged in more social contacts.

But it is not so easy to simply start exercising. The participants described how their depression created a resistance to leaving the house and this makes it difficult have the mental energy to desire to be physically active. Several participants stressed the importance the support they received the physiotherapist, and that exercising together with other participants constituted a meaningful connection.

Importance of design and context

The dissertation's results supports previous research on the antidepressant effects of exercise and highlights the importance of the design and context of the exercise, as well as the opportunities for professional support.

"Our results show that exercise can be used within primary care with the rehabilitation of people with [depression](#)," concludes Louise Danielsson.

More information: "Moved by movement: A person-centered approach to physical therapy in the treatment of major depression."
gupea.ub.gu.se/handle/2077/38464

Provided by University of Gothenburg

Citation: Exercise with a physiotherapist helps people with depression (2015, June 12) retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-06-physiotherapist-people-depression.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.