

Exercise found to decrease suicide attempts in those with mental and physical illness

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A new study from the University of Ottawa's Faculty of Medicine found patients with mental or physical illness were able to successfully adhere to exercise regimes despite previous thinking, resulting in decreased

suicide attempts.

The findings cast doubt on the misconception that [patients](#) suffering from mental or [physical illness](#) are not motivated to participate in a physical exercise regime, which has similar efficacy to antidepressants and cognitive behavioral therapy in the treatment of depression. Its effect on suicidal behaviors, however, was unclear.

"This misconception has led to primary care providers under-prescribing exercise, resulting in further deterioration of patients' mental and [physical health](#)," says Dr. Nicholas Fabiano, a psychiatry resident and lead author of the study with medical student Arnav Gupta.

"The findings of this study 'debunk' this belief as exercise was well tolerated in those with mental or physical illness. Therefore, providers should not have apprehension about prescribing exercise to these patients."

Under the supervision of Dr. Marco Solmi and Dr. Jess Feidorowicz from the Department of Psychiatry, Fabiano and Gupta evaluated 17 randomized control trials with over 1,000 participants to deduct their findings, which are published in the *Journal of Affective Disorders*.

More information: Nicholas Fabiano et al, The effect of exercise on suicidal behaviors: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials, *Journal of Affective Disorders* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.jad.2023.02.071](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2023.02.071)

Provided by University of Ottawa

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