High-intensity resistance training in post-acute care produced better outcomes and patient experience
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Gustavson, PT, DPT, Ph.D., at the CU Anschutz Medical Campus. "Our findings demonstrate that high-intensity resistance training is safe, effective, and preferable in caring for medically complex older adults in skilled nursing facilities.

The researchers implemented a study consisting of 103 participants split into two nonrandomized independent groups (usual care and high-intensity) within a single skilled nursing facility. For both groups, physical therapists administered the Short Physical Performance Battery and gait speed at evaluation and discharge. Additionally, an observational checklist and documentation audits were used to assess treatment fidelity and regression analyses evaluated the response of functional change by group.

For the high-intensity training, the physical therapists used the i-STRONGER program (Intensive Therapeutic Rehabilitation for Older Skilled Nursing Home Residents). The results showed that patients participating in the high-intensity program benefited by increasing their function, specifically by significantly increasing their walking speed from evaluation to discharge by 0.13 m/s which exceeds clinically meaningful changes in walking speed. Also, their stay at the skilled nursing facility was reduced by 3.5 days.

The researchers advocate that their findings signal the need to fundamentally change the intensity of rehabilitation provided to patients with medically complex conditions to promote greater value and patient experience within post-acute care.

The Principal Investigator Jennifer Stevens-Lapsley, MPT, Ph.D., FAPTA, adds, "Our study shows that the quality of rehabilitation compared to the quantity drives better outcomes. These findings provide a timely solution to address rehabilitation..."
value in the context of recent post-acute care changes by policymakers who are looking to raise the bar on the quality and efficiency of post-acute care services."

"We are eager to support the transition to this more effective and safer, high-intensity care approach. We are encouraged by the results that accelerated the improvement in patient function, created positive patient and clinician experience, and resulted in less time needed for care in the skilled nursing facility. As always, and especially now in the era of COVID-19, less time spent in an institutional setting is desirable."


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