Health Benefits of Exercise

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Physically Active People More Likely to Report Good Health

A recent study in the *European Journal of Public Health* analyzed the association between obesity, waist circumference, and physical activity and subjective (self reported) health status. Authors used data from the Belgian Food Consumption Survey, as well as face-to-face interviews.

Results showed that people who participated in both health enhancing and recommended levels of physical activity reported significantly better health than people who were inactive.. In addition, obese people were significantly less likely to report good health than their non-obese peers. There was no association between waist circumference and self reported health.

Exercise Is Good for Childhood Cancer Survivors

Childhood cancer survivors are at an increased risk for several medical and psychological conditions in adulthood such as low bone density, obesity, cardiovascular disease, and reduced quality of life. Exercise may help kids avoid these conditions in adulthood, but little research has been done on the topic. Now, a study in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine* looked at the impact of exercise on health and quality of life in childhood cancer survivors.

During the study, participants exercised 2-3 times per week for 6 months. After 6 months, participants who exercised saw greater improvements in their aerobic fitness than those who did not. While the study was too small to identify additional benefits, when the exercise and non-exercise groups were combined, results showed that improvements in aerobic fitness were associated with changes in lean body mass, bone health, and social quality of life. According to the authors "childhood cancer survivors should be continuously encouraged to exercise, in order to both improve their immediate well-being, and to decrease their risks for potential late effects of pediatric cancer."

Supervised Community Exercise Programs Help Prevent Metabolic Syndrome

Metabolic syndrome refers to having multiple risk factors for heart disease, like high blood sugar and obesity. A study in the June issue of *Prevention Medicine* looked at the effect of a 14-week supervised community exercise program on symptoms of metabolic syndrome.

After the 14-week program, the number of people with metabolic syndrome decreased by nearly 9% and the number of people reporting no symptoms of metabolic syndrome increased by 56%. In addition, people who spent the most energy during exercise were 6.5 times as likely as those who spent the least to restore fasting glucose, HDL cholesterol, and cardiorespiratory fitness to desirable levels.

Latino Patients Whose Physicians Recommend Exercise More Likely Be Active

Research has shown that people who talk to their physicians about lifestyle changes are more physically active. To better understand this relationship in the Latino population, researchers looked at the impact of talking with a physician about of healthy lifestyles had on self-reported physical activity among Latinos.

The results showed that patients were more likely to exercise if physicians communicated and provided support for exercise. It was also found that Latino patients who talked to their doctor about exercise were more likely to engage in leisure time activity and walk or bike to work.

Exercise Training Is Safe and Improves Fitness in People with Congenital Heart Disease

Congenital Heart Disease (CHD) refers to a number of conditions characterized by structure or functional problems with the heart that are present from birth. While the consensus is that exercise should be recommended for people with CHD, this is not often practiced. This study in the *International Journal of Cardiology* looked at the current literature on exercise programs for people with CHD.

The results included data from 31 articles involving 621 participants. Most studies involved training sessions 3 times per week for 12 weeks. The majority of studies found significant, positive changes physical fitness, activity levels, and muscle strength, and none of the studies reported negative effects resulting from exercise. Overall, exercise was safe and improved fitness outcomes in children and youth with CHD. Health clubs provide a safe, supportive environment for people to exercise and increase their fitness levels.

SOURCES

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