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CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

Effects of physical exercise on balance and quality of life among elderly women

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Abstract

Balance disorder is often a cause of falls and fractures in elderly people. Improvements in balance self-efficacy in women have been reported after group-based exercise programs in the form of resistance training weight-bearing exercises tai chi and task oriented training programs. The aim of this study was to evaluate the effects of the exercises on the static and dynamic balance and quality of life in elderly women. **Method**: The study design was a randomized controlled clinical trial. The subjects comprised 58 elderly women aged 65 or more with balance disorder who had been referred to the geriatric outpatient unit for rehabilitation. Subjects were assigned randomly to one of the two treatment groups: an exercise interventional group (n=28) and a non-exercise control group (n=30). Specific balance strategy training included stretching strength training and aerobics was performed 60 min per day thrice a week. Changes in balance (Berg Balance Scale BBS) and quality of life (WHOQOL-OLD) were compared between the two groups. Both groups were assessed at baseline and after six and 12 months. Statistical significance was established at the $p<0.05$ level. **Results**: After 12 months in our study subjects in intervention group we have identified significant improvement in balance and quality of life (Mann-Whitney's U test). **Conclusion**: Despite the small sample size these results support the benefits of exercise in the clinical management of subjects with balance disorder but need to be confirmed in a larger sample. Future research is needed to determine if these exercise programs reduce falls in the elderly women.

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