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Oral Presentation

The Benefits of Increased Physical Activity and Higher Cardiorespiratory Fitness in People Living with Mental Health Disorders, with Specific Emphasis on Anxiety Disorders

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Abstract

Evidence has been accumulating for some time regarding the reduced life-expectancy experienced by people living with a mental illness. In developed world settings this can involve a two-decade reduction in life expectancy, whilst in the developing world the gap may be as high as thirty years. Whilst genetic risk factors and suicide contribute to this 'scandal of premature mortality', modifiable risk factors such as poor diet and high levels of sedentary behavior play a major role. There is growing recognition of the benefits of increasing levels of physical activity and improved levels of cardiorespiratory fitness in a wide range of psychiatric conditions. Evidence from randomized controlled trials and real-world implementation studies clearly demonstrate improvements in physical health parameters, reduced levels of psychiatric symptomatology, higher ratings of quality of life, and better psychosocial functioning. This talk will review this evidence-base in relation to anxiety disorders. Based on this review, strategies to increase levels of physical activity and reduce levels of sedentary behavior are clearly required in patients with anxiety disorders.

Keywords: Anxiety disorders, Risk factors, Patients

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