

Physical activity for the elderly in institutions

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Abstract

Background. Elderly people in institutions are subjected to the occurrence of psychogenic iatrogenic disorders often due to communication errors with the medical staff. These lead to mistrust and the appearance of new physical disorders that affect physical activities.

Aims. The aim of this study was to evaluate the physical activity, the prevalence of depression and the anti-iatrogenic and antidepressive effect of physical activity of elderly people in state nursing homes.

Methods. We included in the study 86 elderly people from a state nursing home in Alba-Iulia in May-June 2008. They were 39 women and 57 men, aged between 61 and 92 years. The elderly people had been in the nursing home between 7 and 10 years. They were divided in two groups: the first group: 40 men with an average age of 75.4 ± 7.5 years; the second group: 36 women, average age 73.2 ± 5.2 years. The following tests were performed: physical activity index (IAF), based on the Dumitriu questionnaire; depression index (ID) based on the Geriatric Depression Scale (SGD), adapted from Sheikh and Yesavage.

Results. Body mass index revealed normal values for the majority of the patients in both groups. The Body Mass Index show increased values for the low fitness category males and reasonable fitness category females. The correlation between Body Mass Index and Physical Activity Index is inversely proportional. The correlation between depression scores and Physical Activity Index is inversely proportional.

Conclusions. For the elderly people in state nursing homes, aged 70 or older we observed an acceptable physical activity. Physical activity for those aged over 70 years, with regard to the intensity and duration demonstrates anti-iatrogenic, antidepressive effects.

Keywords: physical activity, elderly, depression, iatrogenic.