



Aging & Chronic Diseases

Exercise preferences in Parkinson's disease

How can additional exercise be implemented best?

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People suffering from Parkinson's disease (PD) present with motor symptoms such as impaired gait, balance and freezing of gait, as well as with a variety of non-motor symptoms, most commonly cognitive decline and depression.

Strong evidence supports the benefits of exercise for people with PD by decreasing both motor and non-motor symptoms, improving quality of life and reducing the risk of falls.

Preliminary evidence indicates that aerobic exercise can also induce neuroplasticity, delay disease progression, reduce depressive symptoms and improve cognition.

A recent study by a group of academic physiotherapists in Australia used a discrete-choice experiment to determine the preferences of people with PD regarding exercise programmes that they could add to their daily routines. Although many people who participated in the study already did some exercise as part of their daily routine, few met appropriate exercise guidelines.

Unsurprisingly, people with PD are more willing to participate in exercise programmes that cost less and involve less travel.

However, there were some other important findings. For example, people with PD were more interested in programmes that are supervised by qualified professionals.



They were also more interested in exercise programmes that would provide physical and psychological benefits. Men were more likely to consider adopting strengthening exercises, whereas women were averse to adopting aerobic exercise. To facilitate more exercise among people with PD, healthcare services should provide programs aligned with these factors.

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