



Aging & Chronic Diseases

High intensity functional exercise in hospitalized elderly

What is the effect on clinical outcomes?

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Many hospitalized older adults receive physiotherapy to optimise their mobility and physical functioning. Due to the aging population, the efficiency and effectiveness of physiotherapy is of increasing importance. This study sought to determine if group-based high-intensity functional exercise (HIFE) could improve the efficiency of physical therapy and the effect on clinical outcomes more than individual physical therapy alone in hospitalized older adults.

A total of 454 hospitalized older adults were randomised to the experimental (HIFE) group or the control group. The control group received 5 regular individual physiotherapy sessions a week. In the HIFE group, 3 of these sessions were substituted by group-based HIFE sessions, where a maximum of 6 participants performed weight-bearing functional exercises targeted at varying levels of mobility with a physiotherapist for 45-60 minutes. Results show that there were no significant differences in improvement of functional outcomes between group. No adverse events were related to participation in the trial. However, with the group treatments, physiotherapists were able to work significantly more efficient.



In conclusion, the use of group-based high-intensity functional exercise in hospitalized older adults may be feasible based on the outcomes of this study. Group-based HIFE yielded similar clinical outcomes as individual physiotherapy and improved therapist efficiency.

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