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Multi-Dimensional Mood Changes Following Exercise in Long Term Care Residents with AD

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Introduction:
Few researchers have examined positive and negative moods as outcomes in studies of individuals with Alzheimer’s disease. Interventions that increase positive moods and decrease negative moods have the potential to improve quality of life for this population. The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of exercise on positive and negative moods in older adults with Alzheimer’s disease.

Method(s):
This was a secondary analysis of data from a previously reported study. A quasi-experimental pretest-posttest design with random assignment to treatment group and examiners who were blinded to treatment group assignment was used. Subjects' average Mini-Mental State Exam score was 7.3 (SD = 6.19) out of a possible total of 30. Forty-five nursing home residents aged 71-101 (mean 85, SD = 5.95) who met baseline screening criteria for depression using the Cornell Scale for Depression in Dementia were assigned to one of three interventions (comprehensive exercise, supervised walking and social conversation). Mood was measured using the AD-RD Mood Scale (Tappen and Williams, 2008). The AD-RD Mood Scale is an observational instrument with five subscales (spirited, hostile, contented, apathetic, and sad).

Results:
Controlling for baseline mood, baseline mental status and for treatment intensity, significant differences were found on the angry, sad and peaceful subscales of the AD-RD Mood Scale. The results indicated lower levels of anger and sadness and greater peacefulness in the comprehensive exercise and walking groups as compared to the participants engaged in casual conversation. There were no differences in the degree of spiritedness or withdrawal observed at posttest across the three treatment groups.
Discussion:

Depression in Alzheimer's disease is a serious problem with few options for treatment. Medications may not be effective and side effects can limit their usefulness. An intervention that decreases anger and sadness and increases peacefulness may be valuable in reducing behavioral problems.

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