

WIP-0495 COMBINING EXERCISE WITH EDUCATION BASED ON TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING PRINCIPLES IN FIBROMYALGIA PATIENTS: A CASE SERIES

C. Caeiro, R. Fernandes, E. Cruz, A. Valverde, S. Rodrigues
Physiotherapy, Health School, Polytechnic Institute of Setúbal, Setúbal, Portugal

Objectives: Research has suggested that exercise is effective in addressing pain, fatigue and function in fibromyalgia. Education has also been recommended, however there is little information concerning the type of educational approach that should be adopted to address mal-adaptive cognitions that seem to impact pain and function. This study aims to describe the pragmatic use and effects of combining exercise with an educational approach based on the transformative learning theory in fibromyalgia patients.

Methods: A case series design was carried out on 11 fibromyalgia patients, referred to physiotherapy. The patients (screened for inclusion/exclusion criteria) underwent an 8-week (3 times weekly) standardised programme of exercise and education. The educational component (45–60 minutes) preceded 9 of the 24 exercise sessions of equal duration. Patients were assessed at baseline, 4 and 8 weeks later. Outcome measures included the Numeric Pain Scale, the Revised Fibromyalgia Impact Questionnaire, the Fatigue Severity Scale and the Patient Global Impression Scale.

Results: The 11 patients (females; 49.5 ± 9.9 years; ≥ 24 months of fibromyalgia) attended an average of 18.4 ± 3.4 (mode = 22) sessions. Of the 11 patients, 9 improved function, 7 decreased pain intensity, 7 decreased fatigue severity and 9 reported being “better” or “much better” in at least one of the outcomes (pain/fatigue/function).

Conclusion: These results support a combination of exercise with an educational approach based on the principles of transformative learning theory for fibromyalgia patients. This methodological approach limits cause-effect relations, reinforcing the need for further research.