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Review

Physical activity level and health-related quality of life in the general adult population: A systematic review

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Abstract

Objective.

Little is known regarding health-related quality of life and its relation with physical activity level in the general population. Our primary objective was to systematically review data examining this relationship.

Methods.

We systematically searched MEDLINE, EMBASE, CINAHL, and PsycINFO for health-related quality of life and physical activity related keywords in titles, abstracts, or indexing fields.

Results.

From 1426 retrieved references, 55 citations were judged to require further evaluation. Fourteen studies were retained for data extraction and analysis; seven were cross-sectional studies, two were cohort studies, four were randomized controlled trials and one used a combined cross sectional and longitudinal design. Thirteen different methods of physical activity assessment were used. Most health-related quality of life instruments related to the Medical Outcome Study SF-36 questionnaire. Cross-sectional studies showed a consistently positive association between self-reported physical activity and health-related quality of life. The largest cross-sectional study reported an adjusted odds ratio of â€œhaving 14 or more unhealthy daysâ€ during the previous month to be 0.40 (95% Confidence Interval 0.36â€“0.45) for those meeting recommended levels of physical activity compared to inactive subjects. Cohort studies and randomized controlled trials tended to show a positive effect of physical activity on health-related quality of life, but similar to the cross-sectional studies, had methodological limitations.

Conclusion.

Cross-sectional data showed a consistently positive association between physical activity level and health-related quality of life. Limited evidence from randomized controlled trials and cohort studies precludes a definitive statement about the nature of this association.

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Keywords

Exercise; Quality of life; Health; Adult; Population

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