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Holistic Fitness Exercise as a Self-empowerment Tool to Promote Physical Well-being of Patients with Hypertension

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Introduction

Sedentary lifestyle is one of the primary causes of chronic illnesses including hypertension. There is strong clinical evidence of active lifestyle with regular exercise as an effective measure for management and prevention of chronic diseases. People are fully aware of the benefit of regular exercise, however many of them are being refrained by various difficulties. In order to facilitate a sustainable regular exercise habit through self-empowerment, exercise should be designed to overcome barriers including equipment and space. Holistic Fitness Exercise (Ho-Fit Exercise) is a set of physical fitness program with ten-form exercises specifically developed for easy implementation. It is a joyful exercise requiring no exercise equipment. A tiny space with nine square feet area is sufficient to perform this exercise. Therefore, it can be performed in home environment of most Hong Kong residents. The Ho-Fit Exercise can be progressed from low, medium to high exercise intensity to suit individual's fitness level. Moreover, it can be performed anywhere, anytime and in any combination of forms to fit client's preference.

Objectives

To review the efficacy of Ho-Fit Exercise in promotion of physical fitness and regular exercise habit in a group of patients with hypertension.

Methodology

Patients diagnosed hypertension and fulfilled inclusion criteria were recruited into a 6-week physiotherapy program in GOPC. Ho-Fit Exercise was prescribed and empowered by a physiotherapist. Assessment was conducted at baseline and 6 months post intervention. Body weight, self-efficacy on exercises and self-perceived physical activity level were evaluated. International Physical Activity Questionnaires (IPAQ) and Self-Efficacy for Exercise (SEE) Scale were used to measure self-perceived physical activity level and self-efficacy on exercises respectively. Pre and Post-test results of body weight and IPAQ were analyzed using paired t-test.

Result

From Jan to May 2015, a total of 26 patients were recruited into the program. All patients have completed the 6-month follow-up. There is statistically significant reduction in body weight ($p<0.01$) and self-perceived physical activity level ($p<0.01$). The percentage of patients with SEE scale scoring higher than 5 increased from 42 to 73%. Ho-Fit Exercise has demonstrated an effective self-management tool in augmentation of regular exercise habit. This low cost but high value exercise would be applicable to management of other chronic diseases such as diabetes and chronic renal diseases in future.