

Poster presentation

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Background

Alzheimer's disease is the most common dementia (50–65%). It affects, mainly, people aged 65 and over. It attacks the brain resulting in a decline or loss of intellectual functions, such as remembering, thinking, speaking. Physical exercise improves physical, cognitive and functional abilities of the elderly, and contributes to better psychological function. Regular physical exercise appears to have a positive effect on Alzheimer's disease patients' cognitive abilities. The Aim of this project was the investigation of the hypothesis that a multifarious exercise programme may help Alzheimer's disease patients to maintain or enhance their cognitive abilities.

Materials and methods

Twenty four (24) patients with Alzheimer's disease (according to NICDS-ADRDA and DSM IV criteria for Alzheimer's disease) consisted the experimental (12 patients, 8 men and 4 women, mean age 65.70 years, and 9.33 years of education) and the control group (12 patients, 8 men and 4 women, mean age 68.50 years, and 8.92 years of education). The experimental procedure lasted 36 weeks. The patients were all evaluated for their cognitive (MMSE) status, two weeks before and after the experimental manipulation.

Results

Paired Samples t-tests revealed that the patients of the experimental group managed to maintain their cognitive abilities ($t(11) = 0.692$, $p = 0.504$), while the patients of the control group deteriorated ($t(11) = 3.570$, $p = 0.004$).

Discussion

The implementation of a multifarious exercise programme designed to deal with the deficits and needs an Alzheimer's disease patient faces, may contribute in delay-

ing the progress of the disease by preserving his/her cognitive abilities.

References

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