Efficacy of Exercise Interventions Applied to Populations Diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and/or Binge Eating Disorder(s) on Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review

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Physical therapists can play an integral role in the treatment of patients with eating disorders.

Efficacy of Exercise Interventions Applied to Populations Diagnosed With Anorexia Nervosa, Bulimia Nervosa, and/or Binge Eating Disorder(s) on Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review.

PURPOSE
To investigate the effects of physical exercise interventions including resistance training, yoga, and aerobic training on quality of life, physiologic status, and functional outcomes in those diagnosed with Anorexia Nervosa (AN), Bulimia Nervosa (BN), and/or Binge Eating Disorder (BED).

To raise awareness of the effects of eating disorders and aid physical therapists in clinical decision making regarding their role within the interdisciplinary team.

METHODS

RESULTS and DISCUSSION
- High intensity resistance training is more effective in comparison to low/moderate intensity resistance training for patients with AN.
- Physical Exercise and Dietary therapy was just as successful as CBT in alleviating symptoms of BED and BN.
- Positive effects on psychological well-being and emotional regulation skills were noted with groups who participated in yoga or resistance interval training for patients with BN and BED.
- Incorporation of aerobic exercise alongside cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can improve outcomes and physical performance for patients with BED.
- Physiological measures were improved when patients underwent PT-supervised mental health counseling sessions that focused on physical activity for patients with BED.
- Studies involving an in-patient population were not notable for any negative intervention effects, suggesting that structured exercise is safe to perform in an acute setting.

PT IMPLICATIONS
Know the warning signs
Be aware of common comorbidities
Utilize safe interventions
Use patient-centered language

RESOURCES
192 total articles
PsyInfo (EBSCO): n = 131; PubMed: n=31; CINAHL: n=6; Health Source: Nursing Academic Edition (EBSCO): N=20; Hand Search: n=4
191 articles scanned for title and limiters
70 papers retrieved for more detailed evaluation
11 studies included in analysis
121 studies did not meet inclusion criteria: Publication date after 2010; English translation available; Scholarly (Peer Reviewed) Journals; subjects < 50 years old, interventions within physical therapy scope of practice, and PEDro score ≥ 3
59 studies further excluded - 55 not relevant to research question - 4 systematic reviews

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