

Exercise prescription in the emergency department: Patient perceptions

Fiona Milne¹, Kalen Leech-Porter², David Lewis^{1,3}, Jacqueline Fraser⁴, Stephen Hull^{1,5} and Paul Atkinson^{1,3}

¹ – Dalhousie University, Saint John Campus, NB,
² – Dalhousie University, Integrated Family/ Emergency Residency Program, Saint John, NB.,
³– Department of Emergency Medicine, Dalhousie University, Saint John Regional Hospital, Saint John, NB,
⁴– Department of Emergency Medicine, Saint John Regional Hospital, Saint John, NB.,
⁵– Department of Internal Medicine - Endocrinology, Dalhousie University, Saint John Regional Hospital, Saint John, NB

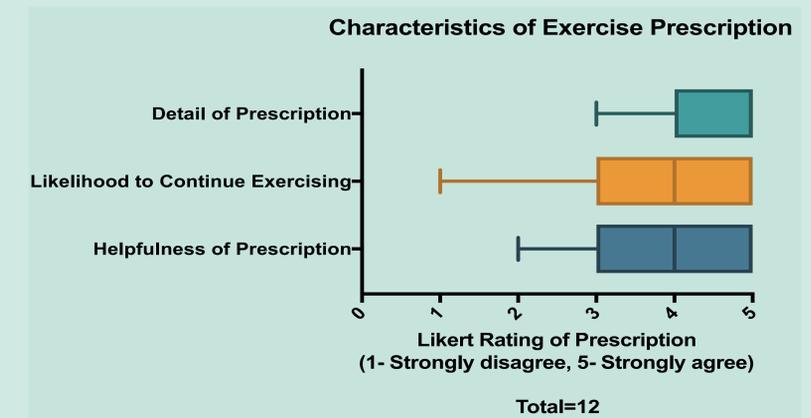


Introduction:

The positive health outcomes of exercise have been well-studied, and exercise prescription has been shown to reduce morbidity in several chronic health conditions. However, patient attitudes around the prescription of exercise in the emergency department (ED) have not been explored. The aim of our pilot study is to explore patients' willingness and perceptions of exercise being discussed and prescribed in the ED.

Methods:

This study is a survey of patients who had been previously selected for exercise prescription in a pilot study conducted at a tertiary care ED. This intervention group were given a standardized provincial written prescription to perform moderate exercise for 150 minutes of aerobic exercise per week. Participants answered a discharge questionnaire and were followed up by a telephone interview 2 months later. A structured interview of opinions around exercise prescription was conducted. Questions included a combination of non-closed style interview questions and Likert scale. Patients rated prescription detail, helpfulness and likelihood on a Likert scale from 1-5 (1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree). Median values (+/- IQRs) are presented, along with dominant themes.



Should exercise be discussed in the Emergency Department?

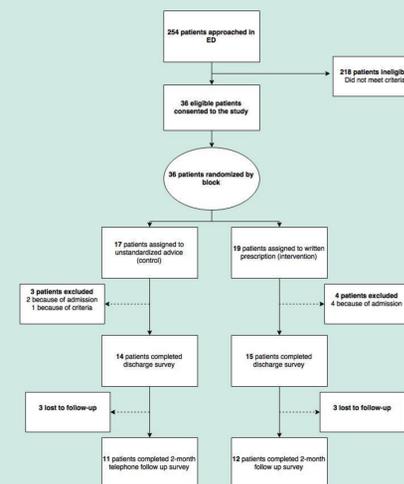
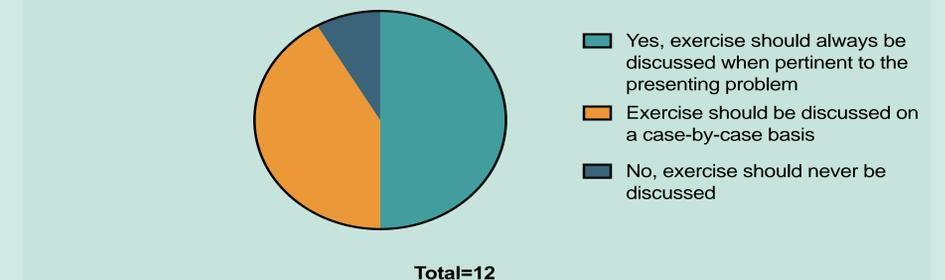


Figure 1: CONSORT diagram describing block randomization of patients

Rx for Health
pour la santé

Date: _____
Name/Nom: _____

Je recommande/Je recommande :

Walking/La marche Other/Autre : _____

_____ minutes a day/Minutes chaque jour
_____ days per week/Jours par semaine

On a scale of 1 to 10, regarding the patient's confidence that they can achieve the above activity goal, the patient answered/Sur une échelle de 1 à 10, en ce qui a trait à la confiance du patient à l'égard de l'atteinte de l'objectif ci-dessus en matière d'activité physique, le patient a répondu _____

* Health Canada suggests moderate activity of 30 minutes per day 1.5 days a week / Santé Canada suggère des activités modérées d'environ 30 minutes par jour 1.5 fois par semaine

For recommendations tailored to your age, Google "Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines." / Pour obtenir des recommandations adaptées à votre âge, utilisez Google pour trouver les Directives canadiennes en matière d'activité physique.

Physician signature/Signature du médecin: _____

Figure 2: NBMS Exercise prescription distributed to patients

Results:

19 people consented to exercise prescription and follow up surveys. 4 were excluded due to hospital admission. 15 participants were enrolled and completed the discharge survey. Two-month follow up survey response rate was 80%. Patients rated the detail given in their prescription as 5 (+/-1). Helpfulness of prescription was rated as 4 (+/-2). Likelihood to continue exercising based on the prescription was rated as 4 (+/-2). 11/12 participants felt that exercise should be discussed in the Emergency Department either routinely or on a case-by-case basis. 1 participant felt it should not be discussed at all.

Conclusion:

Our study demonstrates that most patients are open to exercise being discussed during their Emergency Department visit, and that the prescription format was well-received by study participants.



Key words

Exercise prescription; health promotion; behaviour

Acknowledgements:

- George Stoica, Research Services, Horizon Health Network for statistical advice
- Fiona Milne received summer funding from the DMRF Katelyn Robarts Summer Research Studentship.
- Luisa Montoya and the New Brunswick Medical Society for providing exercise prescription pads