Samantha Crose, Alyson Kessner, Joe Mooney, and Rachel Sotak

The Effects of a Short-Term Exercise Intervention on the Physical and Mental Health Variables in a Population of Adults with Intellectual Disabilities

Skidmore College Department of Health and Exercise Sciences
Faculty Advisors: Crystal Moore and Patricia Fehling

Abstract:

Introduction: Adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) are significantly more likely to be obese and lead sedentary lifestyles than the general population. The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of a seven-week exercise intervention on quality of life (QOL), exercise self-efficacy (ESE), balance, mobility, and strength in a population of adults of adults with ID. It was hypothesized that there would be significant differences found between an exercise and control group after the intervention. **Methods:** All 16 participants (Control: n=6 male, n=2 female, age=44.5 ± 13.6 years, weight=78.8 ± 28.3 kg, height+l70.0 ± 13.6 em, Exercise: n=6 male, n=2 female, age=48.5 ± 14.3 years, weight=87.9 ±22.9 kg, height=165.0±10.5) were previously diagnosed with Down syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder, or mild to moderate mental retardation and recruited from Saratoga Bridges Alpha Day Services Program. Measurements of all five variables were recorded pre- and post-intervention: questionnaires for QOL and ESE, Tinetti Balance Assessment for balance, Timed "Up and Go" Test for mobility, and hand grip strength test for strength. **Results:** There was no significant effect ($P>0.05$) found across the four conditions for any variable. **Discussion:** Although exercise has been reported to foster improvements in these variables within this population, limitations in the current study may have hindered significant results. Major limitations included duration and frequency of exercise, and the spectrum of disorder and capabilities within each group. Subsequent research is needed to make any further conclusions about the effects of exercise in this population.