



Editorial

IJSEHR 2020; 4(1): 41-42
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www.sportscienceresearch.com
Received: 16-04-2020
Accepted: 06-06-2020

Should exercise be also taken on a prescription?

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Medications and drugs have been infamous for their side effects than they are known for their benefits. Patients and members of public always have a doubt or fear in their mind for every new medication they are started on. The usual conversation with the doctor that is initiated by a patient goes something like this: "Doctor, but what are the side effects of medications that you have just prescribed?" or "I have heard and read on Google that this medication has side effects" even before the poor doctor can explain the benefits or the good effects of a treatment or a medication. Nevertheless, some still do have sufficient faith and confidence in some good prescription writing when it comes from healthcare professionals they can trust.

Safety, like in healthcare is also paramount in Sports Medicine and any physical training. Unfortunately, this is not very well recognized on a wider spectrum. Injuries, serious harm as well as death have been observed during sporting events as well as physical training.

In the recent years gymnasium and physical training centers have mushroomed in most towns and cities, big or small. Some of these centers do have strict regulations when it comes to health safety. However, by and large this is generally lacking in most other similar facilities. There are facilities that are functioning without someone physically available for supervision or guidance. This is just not a deficiency but a major health risk of which many are not aware of. Injuries, serious harm including death as mentioned above can happen suddenly without much warning.

I would like to highlight some of problems that are associated as below

1. There is no basic health screening or even using medical questionnaire at the least
2. There is no supervision or presence of a qualified trainer
3. Some trainers do not ask participants' physical limitations or disabilities.

Some individuals tend to overdo things particularly in a group training. The group would generally be a mix of participants of different age group, some with different medical morbidities, varying physical and functional capacity. This is unfortunately not well recognized and addressed by the trainer.

4. Participants may be doing the wrong kind of exercise. For example, a person with a big belly and abdominal fat may be busy in lifting weights alone rather than engaging in calorie or fat burning exercises.
5. Excessive jumping during group exercises may not be suitable for those with bad knees or hips.
6. Floor exercises may lead to fainting or severe dizziness in individuals who are easily dehydrated or those who are on blood pressure medications and diuretics.
7. Some exercises not done correctly under close supervision is likely to cause serious injuries in to back and neck.
8. People who carry excessive body weight or are obese are once again likely to cause injury to their knee or hip joints if they engage in jogging or running even before they shed those extra pounds off.

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9. Duration of exercise should be such that it meets the objectives or fulfills the needs of physical training. Too little provides no health benefit while too much can have deleterious effects on health.

Therefore, like we take medications on prescription which guides us on the right medication that is indicated, right dose, right route of intake, right duration, timings of their intake as well the likely side effects are well explained, exercise should be treated similarly.

It should be made clear as to what the objectives of exercise are. What exactly the given person is looking for or aiming for to achieve whilst doing certain exercises. In addition, he or she should know the suitable exercises and the equipment that may be deemed safe and appropriate for him or her. One should also know one's own limitations as well as the potential risks and harms of an exercise. Close supervision for beginners as well as those with health condition is crucial.

One should therefore have a balanced approach while initiating any exercise program, keeping in mind the safety aspects. It must also be ensured that they benefit the most from exercises that are suitable for their age, body type, functional status as well personal goals.

Therefore, it goes without saying that EXERCISE SHOULD BE TAKEN ON A PRESCRIPTION.

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