



Optimizing physical and cognitive health in patients with Alzheimer's disease

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Abstract

Experimental evidence suggested that brain health is positively influenced by moderate-to- vigorous physical activity that is regularly performed. Physical activity enhances several components of cognition, including executive function (organizing daily activities, planning for the future, and self-regulation of impulsive behavior and sensation seeking), memory, treatment speed and attention. These performance improvements are corroborated by evidence from neuroimaging techniques demonstrating parallel changes in brain structure and function Evidence from the literature suggests that adapted and specific physical activity programs can affect positively cognitive abilities in older adults but also in Alzheimer's disease.

Medical Doctors, health professionals and physical therapists must be educated about physical activity programs that can yield multiple cognitive benefits in older adults or Alzheimer's disease individuals. Health professionals must understand that older adults and individuals with Alzheimer's disease must be aware of the plastic properties of their brain, the potential to maintain/improve their cognitive functioning and the importance to engage in mentally challenging physical activity.

This presentation will try to promote and give more attention to physical activities related to cognitive health. In addition, dose-response and lasting effects of physical activity programs will be discussed in order to identify the optimal programs that maximally take advantage of the neuroplastic properties of the human brain even in late stages of the disease.

Biography

Ahmad Rifai Sarraj, Ph.D. PT is a movement scientist and Professor in Physical Activity and Neurorehabilitation at the Department of Physical Therapy of the Lebanese University in Beirut. My research interests include methodologies for human movement monitoring and analysis with emphasis on neurorehabilitation. My research aims to study mental training, to improve motor function and intervention programs in aging and patients with movement disorders. He has published more than 30 papers in PLOSone, Annals of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation and many peer-reviewed journals. Worldwide, Ahmad Rifai Sarraj has delivered many invited lectures and workshops on neuro and sport rehabilitation. In the previous 5 years, he received over 25000\$ in research funding about his new method of neural motor recruitment from the Lebanese University and the National Center for research in Lebanon.



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