



Does patient-therapist communication change the effect of physical therapy treatment in elder adults? A systematic review

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Aim

This study aims to investigate the additional value of elderly-therapist communication on the effect of physical therapy treatment to increase the physical activity level of elderly.

Conclusion

Although the level of evidence is low, in older adults, it is recommended to repeat easy tasks and improve elder adult's confidence of performing physical activities above setting behavioral goals.

Background

The prevalence of elderly visiting a physical therapist is high. One of the reasons to visit a physical therapist may be to increase physical activity.¹ Previous studies showed a positive effect of a diversity of types of exercise therapies to increase physical activity levels. To enhance the effect of these therapies it is interesting to look at the so-called common parts of a physical therapy treatment. One of the common factors is patient-therapist communication.

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Outcome measure

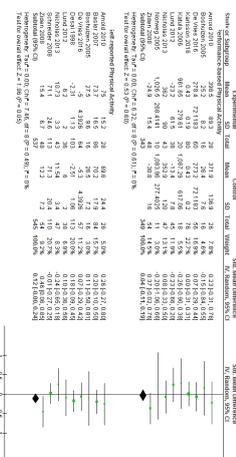


Fig. 1 Forest plot. The overall effect of all included additional communication interventions above exercise compared to exercise alone on performed physical activity. *pooled treatment effects

Results

12 Studies included (n= 1101); 10 musculo-skeletal dysfunction, 1 stroke, 1 COPD. Pedro scores 3-8

High-quality evidence outcome measure:

Very small effect on self-reported physical activity. No effect on performance-based physical activity (walking, TUG, muscle strength) (fig. 1)

Low-quality evidence intervention:

Repetition to improve confidence showed a small effect that favors other behavioral techniques such as goal setting (fig. 2).

Intervention

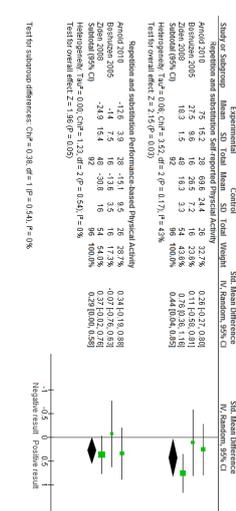


Fig 2 Forest plot. The overall effect of specific behavioral change techniques above exercise compared to exercise alone on physical activity. *pooled treatment effects

Discussion

Sensitivity to change of self-performed against performance-based outcomes
Clinical relevance of small effect sizes
Recommended to study effects of specific Behavior Change Techniques

References

1. Regnaud JP, et al. High-intensity versus low-intensity physical activity or exercise in people with hip or knee osteoarthritis. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2015;29:CD010203