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Physical Activity and Health Status of Members of a Psychosocial Rehabilitation Clubhouse Who Have Serious Mental Illness

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Background

Individuals with serious mental illness have higher mortality and morbidity than the general population.

Many die prematurely from physical illnesses such as cardiovascular and respiratory disease, diabetes, and infectious diseases.

In 2009, the Department of Nursing at University of Michigan-Flint entered into a partnership with community mental health agency to investigate and develop health promotion activities that could reduce risk of chronic disease for members of their psychosocial rehabilitation clubhouse.

Purpose

Our graduate student group examined clubhouse members' past and current physical activities, interests, and health status with the goal of obtaining findings that would lay the foundation for future research and program development.

What is a Clubhouse?

A clubhouse is a place where individuals with mental illness come together during the work week to share work responsibilities, plan and partake in social activities, and share meals together in an environment of mutual support and obligation. Members are responsible for the day-to-day operations of the clubhouse with a minimum of employed staff.

Theoretical/Conceptual Framework

Clubhouse Model:

Based on concepts of membership and belonging rather than treatment.

Social Exchange Theory:

Major tenet is "reciprocity"—mutual giving and receiving of social support among members of a community.

Reciprocity is integral to the recovery process.

Methodology

Participants: Must be at least 18 years old, have diagnosis of severe and persistent mental illness, and have been receiving treatment at a community mental health agency for at least 3 months

Design:

- Focus groups conducted by graduate students and research advisor
 - Two focus group sessions—females and males separated
 - Questions focused on meaning of physical activity, opportunities for physical activity, barriers and facilitators to exercise
- One-on-one meeting with a graduate student
 - Obtained blood pressure, weight, height, demographic information
 - Assisted participant to complete International Physical Activity Questionnaire

Data Analysis from Focus Group Sessions

- Many participants described their physical activities in relation to their chosen clubhouse responsibilities
- Few described physical activity in terms of structured or aerobic exercise
- Barriers included limited space, prohibitive cost, lack of transportation, and physical limitations
- The need for a motivational leader was identified.

Findings from Quantitative Measures

Only four participants did not have high blood pressure, diabetes, or heart, kidney, or respiratory disease. Five participants (42%) had diabetes. Half of the females and a third of the males were obese. Few participants (n=3) regularly engaged in even moderate levels of physical activity.

Table One: Demographics and Health Indicators

Characteristic	Females (n=6)	Males (n=6)	Total Participants (n=12)
Age:			
Mean	37.5 years	47.5 years	42.6 years
Range	25-51 years	39-58 years	25-58 years
Length of membership at clubhouse:			
Mean	9 years	7.4 years	8.2 years
Range	2-19 years	67-17 years	67-19 years
High blood pressure:			
Yes	1	1	2 (16.7%)
No	4	5	9 (75%)
Don't know	1	0	1 (8.3%)
Currently on high B/P medication:			
Yes	2	1	3 (25%)
No	4	5	9 (75%)
Diabetes:			
Yes	2	3	5 (41.7%)
No	4	3	7 (58.3%)
Currently on insulin:			
Yes	0	1	1 (8.3%)
No	6	5	11 (91.7%)
Heart disease:			
Yes	0	0	0 (0%)
No	6	5	11 (91.7%)
Don't know	0	1	1 (8.3%)
Kidney disease:			
Yes	0	0	0 (0%)
No	6	5	11 (91.7%)
Don't know	0	1	1 (8.3%)
Respiratory disease:			
Yes	2	0	2 (26.7%)
No	4	5	9 (75%)
Missing	0	1	1 (8.3%)

A positive finding from the study came from actual blood pressure measurements obtained during the study. Only two women and one man had systolic blood pressure readings in the prehypertension (ie, mildly elevated) range (between 120-130). The remaining participants had normal systolic and diastolic blood pressure readings.

Table 2: Body Mass Index Values Calculated from Weight and Height

Category	Females (n=6)	Males (n=6)	Total Participants (n=12)
Normal	0	0	0
Overweight	1 (16.7%)	4 (66.7%)	5 (41.7%)
Obese	3 (50%)	2 (33.3%)	5 (41.7%)
Extreme Obesity	2 (33.3%)	0	2 (16.7%)

From: Body Mass Index Table, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute at: http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/guidelines/obesity/bmi_tbl.pdf

Table 3: Level of Physical Activity Calculated from Frequency, Duration, and Intensity of Activity

Category	Females (n=6)	Males (n=6)	Total Participants (n=12)
Low	4 (80%)	4 (66.7%)	8 (72.7%)
Moderate	1 (20%)	2 (33.3%)	3 (27.3%)
High	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Unreliable response	1	0	1

From the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) Scoring Protocol at: <http://www.apas.ki.se/scoring.htm>

Conclusion

- These findings parallel previous research with similar populations
- Members of this clubhouse are at high risk from inactivity and physical comorbidities
- Participants expressed interest in physical exercise and health promotion programs

Future Implications

A structured physical activity program that addresses the various capacities and interests of clubhouse members could be a catalyst for change.

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