

Exploring readiness to engage in exercise among people living with HIV and multi-morbidity in Toronto, Canada: a qualitative study

Simonik A, Vader K, Ellis D, Kesbrian D, Leung P, Jachyra P, Chan Carusone S, O'Brien KK. Are you ready? Exploring readiness to engage in exercise among people living with HIV and multi-morbidity in Toronto, Canada: a qualitative study. *BMJ Open* 2016;6:e010029 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010029
Full Article Can be Accessed at:

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/3/e010029.full>



Background

Research has shown that exercise is safe and beneficial for people living with HIV. It can help manage the challenges associated with HIV and multi-morbidity. For people living with HIV, performing aerobic exercise, strength resistance training or a combination of the two at least 3x/week, for at least 5 weeks can improve:

Mobility and function	Joint flexibility
Muscular strength	Cardiovascular endurance
Body composition	Health-related quality of life

Study Purpose

To explore readiness to engage in exercise and the factors that influence it among people living with HIV and multi-morbidity.

Study Participants

Fourteen adults (18+ years of age) who self-identified as living with HIV and at least two additional health-related challenges (multi-morbidity). The majority of participants were men (62%), median age of 50 years, all taking antiretroviral therapy.

The most common concurrent health conditions included addiction (50%), asthma (36%), Hepatitis C (36%), and mental health (26%).

Main Findings

Participants expressed diversity in their readiness to engage in exercise: some didn't think about exercise while others engaged on a daily basis.

"Exercise would be last [in terms of priorities]...I don't think about [exercise] to be honest."

"I'm kind of at the point now where I basically have to go to the gym. I don't even think about it, it's just like routine."

Implications

Health and social service providers have a role to play in promoting exercise as a safe and effective self-management strategy in collaboration with people living with HIV and multi-morbidity.

Key considerations should include the complex and episodic nature of HIV and multi-morbidity that may impact a person's readiness to start (or continue) to exercise.

Health and Social Service Providers should consider....

- ✓ Providing education about the many benefits of exercise for people living with HIV.
- ✓ Addressing common fears people have about exercise (e.g. falling, injury, illness, fatigue).
- ✓ Ensuring that exercise programs are flexible as HIV can be experienced as an episodic illness and people living with HIV may encounter fluctuating periods of wellness and health crises.
- ✓ Connecting people living with HIV with physically and financially accessible forms of exercise.
- ✓ Making sure exercise is fun!

This study was conducted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science in Physical Therapy degree at the University of Toronto, was conducted in partnership with Casey House (Toronto), and was supported by a Connaught New Researcher Award (University of Toronto).

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/3/e010029.full>



CASEY HOUSE

Exploring readiness to engage in exercise among people living with HIV and multi-morbidity in Toronto, Canada: a qualitative study

Simonik A, Vader K, Ellis D, Kesbian D, Leung P, Jachyra P, Chan Carusone S, O'Brien KK. Are you ready? Exploring readiness to engage in exercise among people living with HIV and multi-morbidity in Toronto, Canada: a qualitative study. *BMJ Open* 2016;6:e010029 doi:10.1136/bmjopen-2015-010029
Full Article Can be Accessed at:

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/3/e010029.full>



Helpful Resources



YMCA

YMCA locations, including YMCA Central (20 Grosvenor Street, Toronto) offer access to fitness facilities and programming, as well as subsidized memberships for those who require it.

<http://www.ymcagta.org/>

Variety Village

Variety Village (3701 Danforth Avenue, Scarborough) offers inclusive, accessible fitness facilities for individuals of all physical abilities, including team sports and aquatics. Subsidized memberships are available based on individual circumstance.

<http://www.varietylvillage.ca>

Casey House

Casey House (9 Huntley Street, Toronto) offers activities and exercise programs for clients, including day trips and weekly yoga classes.

<http://www.caseyhouse.com>

Toronto PWA

Toronto People With AIDS Foundation (PWA) is a great source of health information, peer support and exercise programs including a bike rally.

<http://www.pwatoronto.org>

Health Professionals

Health care professionals, such as Physiotherapists, can recommend information about safe and effective exercise!

This study was conducted in partial fulfillment of the Master of Science in Physical Therapy degree at the University of Toronto, was conducted in partnership with Casey House (Toronto), and was supported by a Connaught New Researcher Award (University of Toronto).

<http://bmjopen.bmj.com/content/6/3/e010029.full>



CASEY HOUSE