



THE ROLE OF PHYSICAL THERAPY IN IMPROVING THE LIVES OF THE ELDERLY AND REDUCING INJURY

Physiotherapy

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KEYWORDS

The Role of Physical Therapy in improving the Lives of the Elderly and Reducing Injury The number of aging people has recently increased due to the improvement in the quality of life and healthcare. Therefore, the elderly population is high. Because of the high numbers of the elderly. The healthcare community has found itself with the additional task of ensuring that the elderly retain their ability to live and move with minimum health. Physical therapy professionals are especially important in improving or maintaining the quality of life of the elderly in the population. According to studies, physical therapy is important in rehabilitating injured people and enabling them to recover their ability to perform motor skills. Among the elderly, physical therapy may also have the added advantage of maintaining their ability to move with ease and therefore, making them self-sufficient.

Physical therapy reduces the chances of falls among the elderly. The elderly population encompasses people whose ability to perform psychomotor skills has reduced. As people grow elderly after adulthood, they become more and more prone to falls due to the reduced strengths in their muscles, reduced flexibility and increased rates of fatigue (Ng et al., 2014). Therefore, there is a need for healthcare professionals to ensure that the rate of falls is reduced and therefore by extension, the rate of injuries is reduced. Hence, communities for the elderly usually involve them in physical therapy to ensure that they are not just physiologically fit, but also physically fit. Exercises should be performed to make elders the basic functionality and therefore make them a happier population.

Physical therapy can help the elderly by reducing their pain. The elderly is prone to conditions that result in pain in the muscles and joints. Such conditions come with the process of aging and become worse when people become less mobile. Physical therapy is important in reducing the occurrence of such conditions and therefore reduces the occurrence of pain. Arthritis is one of the conditions that are very common among elderly people. Arthritis affects the joints of the hands and the legs. Arthritis makes it hard for the elderly to perform tasks that they would otherwise be able to perform. For instance, it becomes painful to walk (Gustavson et al., 2017). In other cases, when the illness affects the hands, it becomes tough for the patients to hold things. For patients of the disease, it is important to participate in physical therapy for rehabilitation to regain their ability to operate their hands and legs with less or no pain. Arthritis and other pain associated conditions are one of the reasons why elders in elderly communities are subjected to exercises. According to the Centers for Disease Control, participating in physical therapy is essential among the elderly to help them retain their strength, restore balance and coordination. The use of certain exercises and electrical stimulation may be used to help the elderly reduce the effects of arthritis.

Physical therapy is also important among the elderly because it helps build and retain muscle and bone strength. As part of aging, the elderly encounter muscle weakness and the weakening of bones due to the physiological changes that affect their body systems (Gustavson et al., 2017). For instance, the bone formation processes among the elderly are not as efficient as among the younger people. The less efficient calcium deposition in the bones of the elderly makes them prone to osteoporosis. Osteoporosis is a progressive illness that affects the bones. The illnesses lead to reduced bone mass and density. Therefore, patients of the illness are at great risk of falls and fractures. Physical therapy is important because it slows the progression of osteoporosis among those who have it by allowing the elderly to build up strength.

Even without illnesses, the elderly become weak and frail. Therefore, it is essential to take preventive strategies of ensuring that they retain

their health for long after the aging begins. Physical therapy is one important preventive measures. Physical therapy up-regulates the processes of metabolism. Therefore, the body learns to convert glucose and other metabolites to energy that is needed to perform motor functions (Curry et al., 2018). The body also enhances the ability of the body to take in oxygen through performing light aerobic exercises. Such exercises are important in ensuring that aging happens at a slow pace. The prevention of illnesses and the reduction of the rate of aging is important because it enables the family of the person and the society in general to save the money that would be used in the treatment of illnesses associated with aging.

Physical therapy should also be used in the recovery processes to help the elderly recuperate and therefore reduce the risks associated with muscle weakness such as falls and injuries. Healthcare facilities help the elderly in their recovery processes from illnesses such as stroke. Stroke leads to impaired motor functions (Curry et al., 2018). Therefore, people who are recovering from the illnesses may be prone to falls unless they are supported and taken through a comprehensive physical therapy treatment. Stroke mostly affects the right part of the body. Therefore, patients encounter problems when trying to move their body parts that are affected. Physical therapists perform treatment regimens that allow patients to regain balance and control of their body parts. It is also very important to understand that stroke becomes more prevalent as people age and therefore its treatment is very important in the improvement of the quality of life of the patients.

In conclusion, many people hope that they live long lives, living long lives increases the susceptibility of people to illnesses that affect the elderly. Such illnesses include stroke, arthritis, and osteoporosis and they increase the chances of the elderly to suffer from falls and injuries. Therefore, the healthcare system has had to develop ways of reducing the impacts of such illnesses. Physical therapy is one of the ways. Physical therapy improves the lives of the elderly by allowing them to retain the ability to perform simple physical skills. Physical therapy is also involved in the management of pain when the illnesses occur. Other benefits of physical therapy among the elderly is the improvement of strength and reduction of the rate of aging. Therefore, all elderly should participate in physical therapy that is suitable for their health situation.

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