

Exercise and Life-Satisfactory-Fitness: Complementary Strategies in the Prevention and Rehabilitation of Illnesses

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Abstract

Moderate training of an endurance nature, but also other exercise activities, not only has a preventive effect on various illnesses and pre-illness states such as the metabolic syndrome and cancer, but is also effective in treating patients in the rehabilitation phase after illness, e.g. cardiovascular or cancer. Our investigation demonstrates that even low level physical activity has a very good preventive effect too, which is enhanced when it is accompanied by mental activity and psychological well-being. In total, we investigated 13 000 people on the basis of socio-economic panel polls with respect to life contentment, health status and leisure-time activities. Life contentment is positively linked to contentment with labor, which seems to be an essential aspect with regard to the increasing number of unemployed people in Europe. The second important factor is health-promoting activities during leisure time. Exercise, especially, has a significant influence on life satisfaction as a feeling of physical fitness feeling is regarded as synonymous with good health. The results underline the psycho-neuroimmunological network, which stabilizes our health and shows that different activities in older adults have a significant effect on the aging process and age-related illnesses. Besides the various activities that are important in this arena, namely muscle and mental mobility ('brawn and brain'), a third component must be taken into consideration: life contentment in the form of a successful retrospective view and a positive outlook, embedded in a psychosocial family environment ('brood') and integrated in a stress-free biotope, where life does make sense. Alternative and complementary strategies should be considered in light of these three aspects when we think about additional anti-inflammatory strategies in preventing diseases or treating them and their relapses.

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