

Exercise now proven to have mental health benefits for prostate cancer

16 February 2021



New research has found exercise helps men with prostate cancer reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Credit: Edith Cowan University

New Edith Cowan University (ECU) research has found that exercise not only has physical benefits for men with prostate cancer, it also helps reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Up to one in four men experience anxiety either before or after [prostate cancer treatment](#) and up to one in five report depression, although few men access the support they need.

The study, published in the Nature journal *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases*, is the first randomized controlled trial to examine the long-term effects of different exercise on [psychological distress](#) in men with prostate cancer undergoing androgen deprivation therapy (ADT).

Researchers randomly selected 135 prostate cancer patients aged 43–90 years on ADT to receive either twice weekly supervised resistance exercise or [aerobic exercise](#) for 12 months. Their levels of psychological distress were measured during that time.

Director of the ECU Exercise Medicine Research Institute Professor Daniel Galvão said the study's findings have immediate applications for people living with prostate cancer.

"We now have the data to support the long-term effect of different exercise modes on psychological distress in men with prostate cancer undertaking ADT," Professor Galvão said.

"Whether you do aerobic exercise or resistance exercise it doesn't matter, as long as it's at moderate to high intensity, it's beneficial for reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety."

"We know that exercise benefits people with cancer. Getting a prescribed exercise program is as simple as a referral from a GP to an Accredited Exercise Physiologist," Professor Galvão said.

This research is another important outcome from the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Centre for Research Excellence (CRE) in Prostate Cancer Survivorship and a significant addition to the Psychosocial Model of Care for Men with Prostate Cancer developed by Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia and the CRE.

The paper, "Psychological distress in men with [prostate cancer](#) undertaking androgen deprivation therapy: modifying effects of [exercise](#) from a year-long randomized controlled trial," was published in the journal *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases*.

More information: Daniel A. Galvão et al. Psychological distress in men with prostate cancer undertaking androgen deprivation therapy: modifying effects of exercise from a year-long randomized controlled trial, *Prostate Cancer and Prostatic Diseases* (2021). DOI: [10.1038/s41391-021-00327-2](https://doi.org/10.1038/s41391-021-00327-2)

Provided by Edith Cowan University

APA citation: Exercise now proven to have mental health benefits for prostate cancer (2021, February 16) retrieved 24 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-02-proven-mental-health-benefits-prostate.html>

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