

Effectiveness and safety of aerobic exercise for rheumatoid arthritis



Implication for clinical practice: systematic review and meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials

Generally, aerobic exercise is beneficial and safe for Rheumatoid Arthritis patients.

Aerobic exercise has a certain alleviating effect on symptoms and has shown to improve functional ability, pain and aerobic capacity.

As a result, aerobic exercise should be encouraged, where possible, alongside traditional medical management of Rheumatoid Arthritis.

Context

The purpose of this meta-analysis was to evaluate the effectiveness and safety of aerobic exercise for rheumatoid arthritis patients.

Methods

- Randomised controlled trials of the effectiveness and safety of aerobic exercise for rheumatoid arthritis were included.
- A total of 13 RCTs were included, including 967 rheumatoid arthritis patients.
- Meta-analyses were performed to investigate the effects of aerobic exercise on rheumatoid arthritis
- Aerobic exercise interventions were performed at 50–90% of maximal heart rate, including walking, cycling and jogging.

Results

The meta-analysis results showed that aerobic exercise can improve functional ability.

There were statistically significant differences in

- Pain relief
- Increased aerobic capacity
- Improvements to the sit to stand test

However, there is no substantial evidence to prove that aerobic exercise significantly affects the disease activity itself.

Reference

Ye, H., Weng, H., Xu, Y., Wang, L., Wang, Q., & Xu, G. (2022). Effectiveness and safety of aerobic exercise for rheumatoid arthritis: A systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. BMC Sports Science, Medicine and Rehabilitation, 14(1).