

The effect of Pilates exercise on the happiness and depression of elderly women: a clinical trial study

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BACKGROUND: The available approaches for reducing mental problems, particularly for elderlies, include physical activities and exercise. Pilates is a sport that has received much attention during the past few years. The present study was conducted to explore the influence of Pilates on depression and happiness levels of elderly women. **METHODS:** This randomized trial work was conducted on 60 elderly women referred to the health center of Rafsanjan city, southern Iran. The participants were randomly assigned into two intervention (Pilates) and control groups, each with 30 members. In the intervention group, participants did Pilates three sessions each week for 8 weeks. The control group did not receive any intervention similar to the intervention group. The happiness level of the participants was measured using the Oxford Happiness Inventory (OHI) and their depression was measured using the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) before, one month after, and two months after the intervention. A mixed ANOVA was applied for data analysis. **RESULTS:** The majority of the participants were married housewives with primary education and age range of above 62 years. Based on the findings of this study, the mean happiness and depression scores of the participants at the end of months one and two in the intervention groups increased significantly compared to those of the control group. **CONCLUSIONS:** Doing Pilates for 8 weeks may positively affect the depression and happiness levels of the elderly. Thus, it is recommended as a healthy exercise for elderlies.

KEY WORDS: Happiness; Exercise; Depression; Aged