



RESEARCH TO
PRACTICE 2018

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BRISBANE, QUEENSLAND

EMBEDDING EXERCISE IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AEPS

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Exercise is increasingly well-accepted by clinicians and consumers as an effective and enjoyable activity to help manage the negative symptoms associated with mental illness, to improve cardiorespiratory fitness, and to manage weight gain and other physical health concerns. However like medication, exercise, or the broader scope of physical activity, is only effective if undertaken in a sufficient dose, and over a sufficient period of time. The sustainability of exercise interventions in mental health settings, and in particular, the translation of supported structured exercise programs to self-managed ongoing exercise participation is key to ensuring the continued acceptance of exercise as medicine for people with mental illness.

In essence, the success of exercise in the mental health domain centres on three main points; ensuring the intervention meets the needs of the consumer with respect to the environment, and the type and delivery of exercise; providing adequate program flexibility and supervision; and creating and developing a sense of autonomy. These factors must be underpinned by a focus on consumer engagement in the decision making and implementation process.

This presentation will provide an overview of a number of intervention models across different settings to identify the strengths and weakness of various models, and to highlight the significant role Accredited Exercise Physiologists can play in multidisciplinary mental healthcare teams. Commencing with the inpatient setting, this presentation will provide data supporting how exercise can improve outcomes such as symptom severity, sleep, and mood, and how the establishment of routine and autonomy, although appearing to be oppositional to one another, can be easily combined to meet consumer and organisation needs. In outpatient, transition, and community settings the primary focus will be on the factors that make interventions successful, based on the voice of consumers, and the importance of exercise as part of a holistic approach to mental and physical healthcare.

This presentation will also acknowledge many of the barriers to exercise participation experienced by consumers, and barriers to exercise implementation across a number of settings. Solutions will be proposed to address a number of these barriers, by examining case examples of successful implementation of exercise intervention. Of particular importance will be the focus on including Accredited Exercise Physiologists as part of the solution, and how a true, integrated multidisciplinary approach might be achieved to better serve the needs of this vulnerable population.

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Session: Mental Health
Date: Tuesday, 27 March 2018
Time: 11:00am – 12:30am
Co-Presenters: Prof Alexandra Parker, Dr Robert Stanton, Dr Megan Teychenne
Panel Practitioner: Mrs Katherine Stewart
Session Chairperson: Dr Simon Rosenbaum