



RESEARCH TO
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HEALTHY LIFESTYLE, HEALTHY MIND: EVIDENCE OF THE LINK BETWEEN PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, SEDENTARY BEHAVIOUR AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dr Megan Teychenne

Approximately 3 million Australians currently experience depression and/or anxiety, with women, young-middle aged adults, and socio-economically disadvantaged groups at greatest risk. Individuals experiencing these mental health conditions are more likely to experience sub-optimal health and wellbeing, and are less likely to engage in health-enhancing behaviours such as physical activity. Therefore, it is imperative that effective prevention and treatment strategies are identified. Historically, treatment methods for depression and anxiety have included psychological therapy and medication, of which can be limited by compliance issues and/or adverse side effects. However, over the past few decades research has indicated that physical activity may be beneficial in the prevention and treatment of depression, with a smaller body of evidence suggesting physical activity may also have benefits for reducing anxiety symptoms. More recently, studies have begun to investigate the possible independent link between sedentary behaviour (i.e. sitting/reclining behaviours such as television viewing, computer and electronic device use) and mental health (in particular depressive and anxiety symptoms). Yet, a number of research gaps in the area remain. For example, limited research has investigated the role of various domains of physical activity (e.g. leisure-time, transport, work and/or domestic-related) for the prevention and treatment of depression and anxiety. Similarly, little research has explored the role that different types of sedentary behaviour play in the relationship with these mental health outcomes. Given that practitioners may still experience confusion over how much (dose) and what types (domain) of activities are likely to impact the mental health of their clients, this presentation aims to: 1) Outline the current evidence regarding the relationship between physical activity and depressive and anxiety symptoms, as both a prevention and treatment method - with a key focus on the dose and domain of physical activity; 2) Outline the current evidence regarding the relationship between sedentary behaviour and depressive and anxiety symptoms; 3) Provide practical-focussed take-home messages for exercise physiologists, practitioners and their clients.

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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