

The effects of exercise and meditation on the psychological stress level and Quality of Life of Cypriot men and women, a multimodal investigation

Results:

Introduction:

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of an exercise program, meditation or both combined, on mental stress levels of Cypriot men and women. The group chosen for this study is the working population between 30 and 50 years old, relatively recently urbanised and in a situation of rebuilding their lives following war which displaced them from their traditional homes and way of life. For this group the culture of physical exercise and of deliberate relaxation techniques had not taken root.

Methods:

40 subjects were committed to participate in the study and they were assigned to: Group A, the exercise group, Group B, the meditation group, and group C, who received both exercise and meditation. A control group D was matched for age and background. All subjects were assessed for physical fitness. They were also given psychometric questionnaires assessing quality of life (WHO-Bref) and stress (STAI form X-2).

An individual exercise prescription was given to groups A and C, 3-4 times per week. Groups B and D attended a meditation session once per week, with instructions to continue the program at home. Group D was not assigned any kind of exercise.

Results:

The groups did not differ from each other at baseline, either on physical fitness or quality of life measurements. There was however a very high drop- out rate of 60% with very few completing their assigned program. This made it hard to draw solid conclusions concerning the effects of each type of intervention. The combined approach, exercise and meditation had a more positive effect than the other interventions.

Comment:

The high drop- out rate raises the question whether this working generation of Cypriots needs more preparation to comply with such a program and this merits more sociological investigation. Another question concerns the better results in those who adhered to both exercise and meditation. This group may be self selected, having more faith and expectation from these methods.

Published work:

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