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MODERATE EXERCISE IMPROVES QUALITY OF LIFE IN PATIENTS WITH NON-REMITTED MAJOR DEPRESSIVE DISORDER

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Introduction: In recent years, physical exercise has shown some promising results as an adjuvant therapy for several psychological disorders, helping to improve not only depression parameters but also quality of life. However, and due to the different populations, settings and exercise programs, not all studies have shown a positive association.

Aims: To assess the effect of a moderate intensity 12 week exercise program on the quality of life of a population sample of patients with non-remitted Major Depressive Disorder (MDD).

Methods: Study design Prospective, randomized, two-arm, parallel assignment. Population 150 individuals diagnosed with MDD according to DSM-IV criteria, taking combined therapy in doses considered appropriate for at least 9 months, without showing clinical remission, defined as having an HAM-D17 total score ≤ 7 , attending the out-patient psychiatry clinic, were initially screened through an interview with a psychiatrist. Those meeting study criteria were randomized to one of two groups: control (N=11) and aerobic exercise (N=22). Study protocol Exercise group: moderate intensity exercise program for 12 weeks, in addition to their usual pharmacological therapy. Control group: regular daily activities and their usual pharmacological therapy. Instruments WHOQOL-Bref and SF-36, two validated instruments to assess quality of life.

Results: At the end of the exercise program, participants in the exercise group showed improvement on the physical domain of SF-36 and on the social domain of WHOQOL-Bref ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusions: Results suggest that exercise could help improve some aspects of the quality of life in non-remitted MDD patients.