

Current Evidence in Non-pharmacologic Management for Cardiovascular Disease: Exercise

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Cardiac rehabilitation (CR) programs offer a cost-effective, multidisciplinary, comprehensive approach to address these risk factors and to restore individuals to their optimal physiological, psychosocial, nutritional, and functional status. Cardiac rehabilitation is often divided into phases that involve monitored exercise training program tailored to your needs, nutritional counseling, counselling and education to help you understand your condition and how to manage it, and support and education about lifestyle changes to reduce your risks of heart problems.

Exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation, compared to usual care, reduces all-cause mortality by 20% and cardiac mortality 26% in patient of coronary artery disease. Risk factors such as total cholesterol, triglycerides, systolic blood pressure and self-reported smoking habits were also significantly reduced. Although exercise-based rehabilitation did not achieve significant improvement in mortality, it demonstrated improvements in exercise tolerance and indices of diastolic function, as well as in symptom burden and quality of life in heart failure patients.

Although the clear benefit of cardiac rehabilitation, the poor referral and participation rate in outpatient CR remain alarmingly low. To implement a coordinated effort to promote outpatient CR to eligible patients and to facilitate referral and enrollment is the responsibility of medical staffs.