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Deploying physical activity for cognitive health in persons at risk for Alzheimer's disease

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A wealth of evidence suggests that regular physical activity (PA) promotes neural mechanisms requisite for the maintenance of cognition in aging persons at risk for Alzheimer's disease (AD). Preclinical and clinical studies demonstrate that PA can be deployed to optimize synaptic number and function, neurogenesis, neurotrophin levels, and circadian rhythm while simultaneously mitigating processes involved in plaque and neurofibrillary tangle formation. Nevertheless, more than one-third of the world adult population fails to meet recommended activity guidelines. Given that many of the pathological features of AD precede cognitive decline by decades, ample time exists to harness these health-related benefits. In this session, we will discuss the protocols previously used to alter the progression of AD-related neuropathology before highlighting current implications for physical therapist practice.

Biography

Cristy Phillips is an Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, AR. She is also CEO of Kids and Company, LLC, a pediatric physical therapy provider. She has over 16 years of experience in working with individuals with neurological and cognitive impairment. Her main research interests pertain to how physical activity can be deployed to mitigate impairments associated with neurodevelopmental and neurodegenerative disorders, particularly Down syndrome and Alzheimer's disease.

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