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Perceived beneficial aspects of specific aerobic exercise modalities

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Statement of the Problem: Exercise has repeatedly been demonstrated to provide physical, as well as psychological benefits to participants. Regular participation in aerobic exercise increases cardiorespiratory fitness, which decreases risk of developing many chronic diseases. Aerobic exercise can also decrease stress, reduce depression and enhance quality of life. Despite all these benefits, minimal research has been done to determine which exercise modality is preferred by most participants.

Methodology: Two quasi-experiments were conducted to determine exercise modality preference, particularly among middle-aged women. Participants were assigned to floor/step aerobics (FSA) classes or treadmill walking (TMW) classes. They were asked to rate their satisfaction with their assigned exercise modality mid-way through and following the intervention.

Findings: There were no statistically significant differences between group in total scores, indicating that women in one exercise group were not more satisfied with their modality than were those in the other group, overall. In the first study, TMW participants rated their enjoyment non-significantly higher than did FSA participants, but results were reversed in the second study. While mixed results made it impossible to identify a superior exercise modality based on participant enjoyment, there were logical patterns of preference for certain aspects of each modality.

Conclusion & Significance: In general, specific exercise modality recommendations (between floor/step aerobics and treadmill walking) for women do not need to be made, due to there being no significantly preferred modality, but women who desire certain exercise benefits should be encouraged to pursue a relevant exercise modality.

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