
Depression patients urged to exercise

The national depression initiative, beyondblue, says a new awareness campaign promoting the benefits of exercise could make a significant difference for the one-in-five Australians who suffer depression.

Beyondblue has joined forces with the Exercise Physiologists Association to help educate both GPs and depression sufferers about the effectiveness of using exercise to manage depression.

The Exercise Physiologists Association's New South Wales president, Chris Tzar, says exercise has been proven to be as effective in fighting depression as medication or psychotherapy.

"There are numerous studies that have shown those results," he said.

"They range from aerobic-based exercise like walking or jogging to strength training so what it presents is an alternative to medication if appropriate.

"Exercise can also address a range of other chronic conditions, not just depression."

Beyondblue's chief executive, Leonie Young, says while studies show these results, exercise has been largely neglected as a method to manage depression.

She says the joint association initiative will work to curb that trend.

"When people are visiting the GP and their identifying signs and symptoms of depression they will be able to be referred to an exercise physiologist," she said.

"As well as that though we're really keen to get the message out that depression and exercise are a good fit and keeping active can be a great way of helping manage depression and anxiety."



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