
Fitness Impacts Diabetics More Than Fatness

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) - People with type 2 diabetes may be able to improve their health-related quality of life by getting fit, new research shows.

Dr. Wendy L. Bennett, at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, and her colleagues investigated whether reduced fitness or increased fatness account for the decrease in health-related quality of life seen in type 2 diabetics.

The researchers looked at people participating in two clinical trials of exercise for high blood pressure -- one included 119 people with type 2 diabetes and the other included 98 participants without type 2 diabetes.

The diabetic study participants did indeed have a worse health-related quality of life than the individuals without diabetes. In particular, they were more likely to report limitations due to physical problems, low vitality, and poor general health, the researchers report in the online journal Health and Quality of Life Outcomes.

Cardiovascular fitness was strongly associated with the risk of poor quality of life in diabetic patients. Fatness played less of a role, but it did still have an influence.

However, the negative impact of type 2 diabetes on health-related quality of life could not be completely explained by diabetic individuals' greater fatness and worse fitness.

Nonetheless, the investigators conclude, people with type 2 diabetes might be advised that "incorporating physical activity into their daily routine improves fitness, allows them to do more, feel better, as well as reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease and diabetes-related complications,"

SOURCE: Health and Quality of Life Outcomes, online December 4, 2008.



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