

Rehabilitation interventions effective for older people in long term care

Clinical question	How effective are physical rehabilitation interventions directed at improving physical function among older people (age range 69 to 89 years) in long term care?
Bottom line	The included studies provide evidence physical rehabilitation interventions for elderly people residing in long term care can be both safe and successful, improving both physical and mental state. Most interventions addressed disability in routine activities of daily life, eg, walking, eating and dressing. The trial outcomes addressed by this review were: disability in daily life; strength; flexibility; balance; general physical condition; mood; cognitive status; participant withdrawal rate; session attendance; death; illness; and unwanted effects associated with the intervention, such as injuries. Most interventions lasted less than 20 weeks, and comprised approximately three 30 to 45-minute group sessions per week. While variations between the trials means specific recommendations cannot be made, the trial results were overwhelmingly successful.
Caveat	Due to the wide variety of outcome measures used, the studies could not be summarised statistically. There is insufficient evidence to make recommendations about the best intervention, improvement sustainability and cost-effectiveness.
Context	The number of over 65-year-olds constituted 6.6% of the world's population in 1997 and is predicted to increase to 10% by 2025. It is expected this will lead to a rise in demand for long term residential care. There is, therefore, a demand for ways of preventing any deterioration in health, and for increasing independence in activities of daily living, eg, walking and dressing, among residents.
Cochrane Systematic Review	Forster A et al. Rehabilitation for older people in long term care. Cochrane Reviews 2009, Issue 1. Article No. CD004294. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD004294.pub2. This review contains 49 trials involving 3611 participants.

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- www.cochraneprietarycare.org



PEARLS

Practical Evidence About Real Life Situations

PEARLS 163, April 2009, written by Brian R McAvoy

[References]



COCHRANE
PRIMARY HEALTH
CARE FIELD

PEARLS are succinct summaries of Cochrane Systematic Reviews for primary care practitioners. They are funded by the New Zealand Guidelines Group.

PEARLS provide guidance on whether a treatment is effective or ineffective. PEARLS are prepared as an educational resource and do not replace clinician judgement in the management of individual cases.

View PEARLS online at:

- www.cochranepriarycare.org