

Cultivating Health-Educated Patients

Editorial Staff

Editor's Note: Growing a loyal patient base can be as simple as informed conversations on the health issues patients think about daily, from diet to exercise to healthy aging and cancer prevention, and much more. Review and then share the following patient-friendly research summaries (the latest in an ongoing series) as an education tool that helps reinforce your value in patients' everyday health.

More Exercise, Less Anxiety

New research suggests even people with chronic anxiety can benefit from exercise. The study involved nearly 300 patients with anxiety syndrome; half of the patients had suffered for 10 years or longer. Patients participated in a 12-week fitness program featuring either moderate or strenuous exercise (60-minute sessions, three times weekly); a third group served as controls and received advice only on activity according to public health recommendations.

Exercise sessions in both activity groups featured aerobic and strength training. Patients assigned to moderate-intensity exercise participated in activities designed to reach 60 percent of maximum heart rate; patients assigned to strenuous exercise performed activities designed to achieve 75 percent of maximum heart rate.

After 12 weeks, "A significant reduction in anxiety from baseline to post-treatment was observed in both treatment groups compared to the control group," with most patients reducing their anxiety from a baseline (pre-exercise) level of moderate / high to a posttreatment (after 12 weeks of exercise) of low anxiety. Interestingly, no significant differences were noted between low-intensity and higher-intensity exercise.

Reference

- Henriksson M, et al. Effects of exercise on symptoms of anxiety in primary care patients: a randomized controlled trial. *J Affect Dis*, 2022 Jan;297:26-34.
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Making Migraine Pain Worse

The opioid epidemic continues to kill hundreds of Americans every day due to misuse, abuse and addiction. Research suggests when it comes to managing migraine pain, opioids have another major drawback; they accomplish the exact *opposite* of what they're intended to accomplish: pain relief. Opioids appear to increase both the frequency and severity of migraines, and researchers now understand why.

Migraine pain and pain caused by opioid overuse seem to share a specific peptide - a chain of amino acids that can regulate brain-signaling pathways, among other functions. The peptide in question is called pituitary adenylate cyclase-activating peptide, but knowing its name is far less

important than appreciating its role in migraine and opioid pain – and understanding that opioid use can actually make migraine pain worse.

Reference

- Krishna DB, et al. PACAP and other neuropeptides link chronic migraine and opioid-induced hyperalgesia in mouse models. *Mol Cell Proteomics*, 2019 Dec;18(12):2447-2458.
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Coffee & Tea: Life Savers

We're talking about coffee and tea, and considering how many people drink both beverages worldwide on a daily basis, new research is good news for the overwhelming majority of the planet. In fact, drinking coffee and tea could not only significantly improve your Golden Years; it could save your life.

Dementia and stroke – two words no one wants to hear. Dementia is a general term defined by some disturbing specifics; according to the Alzheimer's Association: "loss of memory, language, problem-solving and other thinking abilities that are severe enough to interfere with daily life." Alzheimer's disease is the most common form of dementia.

A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain or a part of the brain is reduced or interrupted entirely. The result: brain tissue can't get the oxygen and nutrients it needs to survive. Within minutes, brain cells can begin to die, which is why stroke is considered a medical emergency.

Unfortunately, we can't completely control whether we suffer dementia, a stroke or both in our lifetime, but drinking coffee and tea is one way to reduce the risk. Drinking 2-3 cups a day of coffee; 4-5 cups a day of tea; or 4-6 cups of a combination of the two is associated with the lowest risk.

Reference

- Zhang Y, et al. Consumption of coffee and tea and risk of developing stroke, dementia, and poststroke dementia: a cohort study in the UK Biobank. *PLoS Med*, 2021;18(11):e1003830.

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