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It is time to exercise smart rather than exercise hard: A comparison of high intensity interval training and circuit training to traditional aerobic and anaerobic exercises

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Physical exercise is helpful in treatment of mental disorders. Many researches have addressed what effects can exercise generate to psychological health, yet no researches have compared the efficacies of different types of exercises. Consequently, this study compared how different types of exercises, including aerobic, anaerobic and combined exercises independently affect psychological health. In this study, 184 participants were recruited to fill in a questionnaire via an online survey platform (www.qualtrics.com). Generally, participants were asked to report their exercise habit (Aerobic, anaerobic, combined and none) and their psychological health was assessed by DASS-21 and GHQ-12. The data is analyzed by SPSS 21 and ANOVA was used. Chi square analysis was also conducted to measure the relationship among characteristics of exercise including frequency, intensity and enjoyment of exercise. According to the results, no significant difference between groups was found in the scores in DASS-21. However, the three exercise groups revealed significantly better psychological health than the sedentary group in the GHQ-21 ($p = .045$). In addition, the relationship between intensity and enjoyment of exercise was approaching significance ($p = .10$). The current findings were not totally consistent to the existing literature. Limitation in the study design was discussed to explain the disparity between the recent study and the existing literature. Lastly, the main conclusion of this study was that exercise is generally beneficial in the psychological aspect; nonetheless the combined exercise may be a more time efficient and sustainable alternative.

Biography

Paul Ling has completed his Bachelor (Honor's) degree at the age of 25 years from Australian College of Applied Psychology. He is recently working as a research assistant in the Hong Kong Polytechnic University in Hong Kong.

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