

6th International Conference on
PRIMARY HEALTHCARE & PREVENTIVE MEDICINE
&
8th International Conference on
HEALTHCARE SIMULATION July 26-27 | Bangkok, Thailand

The impact of exercise and education on health outcomes in women with osteoarthritis

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The aim of the study was to examine the impact of a six-week exercise, education and self-management intervention on pain and physical function in women with OA at a local primary health care clinic in Cape Town. A randomized control trial, single blinded, pre-test-post-test design was used. Women (N=63) with osteoarthritis (OA) were recruited (EXP=31, CON=32) and completed a six-week intervention and the 12 week follow-up testing. Furthermore, the groups were similar in age, personal and socio-economic characteristics at baseline testing. There was a significant difference between the groups over the 12 week study. For the primary outcome measure, function and disability according to WHODAS, a significant reduction in scores were evident at week 12 ($p<0.01$) between groups. For the lower limb functional tests according

to Aggregated locomotor function tests (ALF), a significant improvement in scores were noticed at week 6 ($p<0.01$) between groups. In addition, there was a significant effect over the 12 weeks with improvements in scores for pain severity ($p=0.02$) and pain interference ($p<0.01$) of the BPI at weeks 6 and 12. This study found that the six-week intervention had significantly reduced the functional disability scores, reduced the overall time to complete the functional tests (walking, climbing stairs, sit-to-stand) and reduced the pain severity and interference scores, thereby improving pain and physical function in women with OA in the EXP group. This intervention could be appropriate to implement at PHC clinics to help reduce pain and improve physical function in women suffering from osteoarthritis.

Biography

Candice Hendricks is currently completing her PhD in physiotherapy and is a lecturer at the University of Cape Town, South Africa. She has a special teaching and research interest in orthopaedics and specifically, in non-pharmacological management of osteoarthritis at primary healthcare level.

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