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Dance: A Recommended Exercise for Menopausal Women

Abstract:

Background: Menopause is defined as a phase in a woman's life where she has cessation of menses. Declining levels of hormones may cause adverse psychological and social changes. There are alterations in several hormones, with one of the primary ones affected being the neurohormone oxytocin. Decreased oxytocin levels may have significant effects on social, emotional, and physiological wellness. Behavior has been implicated to be reduced in this menopausal phase. However, it is known that Although oxytocin decline is related to the decrease in estrogen level, it can be stimulated to be released with specific activities like hugging or cuddling and, in addition there are reports that dance also promotes oxytocin release.

Hypothesis: Data suggests that dance as an exercise indirectly helps in release of oxytocin which thereby promotes social and mental wellbeing especially after menopause, along with cardiovascular benefits. These data promote the concept that dance should be a part of most postmenopausal women's daily activities.

Methods: A Pub med and Google search was done with keyword's "menopause," "oxytocin," "dance."

Results: During the reproductive years, estrogen produced by the ovaries increases oxytocin and oxytocin receptor expression in the brain and other tissues. Social interactions with loved one's cause oxytocin release in the hypothalamus. A decrease in estrogen after menopause may lead to compromised oxytocin signaling thereby having negative implications on social and emotional wellness. However, studies have shown that dance and the social interaction associated with it promotes release of oxytocin which may have a positive impact in postmenopausal women, including cardiovascular health and mental wellbeing.

Conclusion: Limited data suggest that oxytocin release is associated with dance. Given its beneficial effect, especially in terms of cardiovascular and mental wellbeing with the menopause transition, dance may have a future role as guideline directed therapy in postmenopausal women.

Biography

Ryan Kanungo is an intern at the Women's Health Institute at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School since 2023. He is completing his Bachelors in Neuroscience in 2026 at NSU, Florida. He plans to pursue a career path in neuropsychiatry and public health.