Benefits of Exercise During Pregnancy: A Systematic Review

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Considering the proven importance of exercise in today's world, experts and researchers place more emphasis on exercise in reproductive age, especially during pregnancy for women. This systematic review was conducted to determine the benefits of exercise during pregnancy.

Search Strategy: A search was conducted in the Google Scholar, Elmnet, SID, Magiran, PubMed, Elsevier, ScienceDirect with keywords “pregnancy”, “benefits of exercise”, “Parturition”, and “Pregnant women” from 2000 to 2024. From all the articles found, 38 articles were selected and analyzed for the research. The unavailable or irrelevant articles were excluded from the study, and 27 articles were finally evaluated for review.

Results: The results showed that although pregnant women were previously advised to rest and limit physical activity, current recommendations have shifted towards encouraging increased physical activity to promote a more active and healthy pregnancy. Exercise during pregnancy can help prevent pregnancy-related disorders such as excessive maternal weight gain, high blood pressure, urinary incontinence, hip and back pain, anxiety, and depression. Additionally, engaging in regular physical activity, particularly during the second trimester is effective in reducing the risk of gestational diabetes. Standard physical exercises enhance metabolic health by increasing energy and oxygen consumption post-exercise.

Conclusion and Discussion: The amount, intensity, and type of sports activity during pregnancy should be adjusted, considering the mother's sports history and fitness level. Exercise is recommended in low-risk pregnancies.

Keywords: Parturition, Pregnancy, Pregnant women

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