

The effects of mental practice on balance in the elderly

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Abstract:

Introduction: Mental practice refers to "The symbolic rehearsal of a physical activity in the absence of any gross muscular movements". It has been shown in a remarkable number of studies that the use of mental practice like physical practice can produce significant improvements in motor skills. Thus this therapeutic technique can be used in elderly rehabilitation. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of mental practice on balance in the elderly.

Materials & Methods: Thirty healthy old subject over the age of 60 years took part in this study. Subjects solicited from two senior-citizen centers in Tehran and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Balance of subjects was assessed in four stage include baseline, pre- treatment, post-treatment and follow-up. Subjects in experimental group performed mental practice of a motor and balance skill for 3 weeks and control group did not perform any practice in that period.

Findings: The Results of this study indicate that mental practice resulted in a significant increase of clinical Balance tests scores in experimental group.

Conclusion: It can be concluded that mental practice can improve not only motor skill that mentally performed but also the balance of the elderly.

Keywords: Mental Practice / Balance / Elderly