THE EFFECTS OF AEROBIC EXERCISE AND/OR PROGRESSIVE RESISTANCE EXERCISE ON INDIVIDUALS WITH HIV WASTING SYNDROME: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW.

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BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE: The incidence of HIV infection continues to grow in the general population and is considered to be a chronic disease. Patients with HIV infection are one patient group that physical therapists can expect to encounter in practice. The purpose of our study was to review current literature through a formal systematic review process to distinguish clinically safe and effective physical therapy interventions for individuals presenting with HIV wasting syndrome.

METHODS: Four databases were searched. Titles and abstracts were reviewed by independent reviewers. Articles were included if they focused on physical therapy interventions, were randomized control trials, and could be accessed for review. The final articles were scored using the Delphi criteria, effect sizes were calculated, and a final grade for level of evidence was established for each article. The results from our scoring systems were analyzed to decide best practice interventions for persons infected with HIV.

RESULTS: Five rounds of article review were needed to arrive at the final 16 articles that met all inclusion requirements for this study. These 16 articles are organized within this systematic review according to type of intervention.

CONCLUSION: Based on immune function, aerobic capacity, and strength, there is moderate evidence to support aerobic exercise, good evidence to support progressive resistance exercise, and good evidence to support the combination of exercise interventions for HIV wasting syndrome. We conclude that aerobic exercise, progressive resistance exercise, and/or a combination are not detrimental for persons with HIV and may in fact, be beneficial.