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Research Article

The efficacy of a lay health workers – led physical activity counselling program in patients with HIV and mental health problems: a real-world intervention from Uganda

Davy Vancampfort , Peter Kaylira Byansi, Hilda Namutebi, Eugene Kinyanda, Richard Serunkuma Bbosa, Philip B. Ward , ... show all

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the efficacy of a lay health worker (LHW)-led physical activity (PA) counselling program for inactive patients with HIV/AIDS and mental health problems living in a Ugandan farming community. In total 49 (35 women) community patients (40.0 ± 11.2 years) followed an 8-week once weekly LHW-led PA counselling program based on a self-determination theory and motivational interviewing framework. Participants completed the Simple Physical Activity Questionnaire, Patient Health Questionnaire-9, Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7, HIV/AIDS Stress Scale and World Health Organization Disability Assessment Schedule 2 (WHODAS 2) pre- and immediately post-intervention. Small, significant ($P < 0.05$) effect sizes were found for reductions in HIV/AIDS-related stress (Cohen's $d = 0.26$) and in global disability (Cohen's $d = 0.46$). Large effect sizes were observed for reductions in time spent sedentary (Cohen's $d = 1.97$) and reductions in depressive (Cohen's $d = 2.04$) and anxiety (Cohen's $d = 1.47$) symptoms and increases in time spent active (Cohen's $d = 1.98$). Greater decrease in sedentary time was associated with greater anxiety symptoms reduction ($r = 0.32$, $P = 0.021$). In physically inactive patients with HIV/AIDS and mental health problems, an LHW-led PA counselling program reduced stress, anxiety, depression and disability. Randomized controlled trials are needed to confirm these preliminary positive findings.

Q KEYWORDS: [Anxiety](#) [depression](#) [physical activity](#) [sedentary behavior](#)[Previous article](#)[View latest articles](#)[Next article](#)

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Additional information

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