

## Publication

## Aquatic exercising may improve sexual function in females with multiple sclerosis - an exploratory study

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Persons with multiple sclerosis (PwMS) report impaired sexual function, and this is particularly prevalent and burdensome for females with MS. The present study included a randomized controlled trial (RCT) design and examined the effect of aquatic exercise training on sexual function among females with MS.; The sample consisted of 60 married female PwMS (mean age: 37.68 years; median EDSS: 1.75) who were randomly assigned into one of the following conditions: aquatic exercise twice a week (2x/w); aquatic exercise three times a week (3x/w); active control condition (ACC). Participants completed questionnaires regarding sexual function (desire, arousal, lubrication, orgasm, satisfaction, pain), symptoms of depression, sleep complaints, fatigue, and couple satisfaction before and after the 8-week study period.; The interventions had significant and positive effects on the overall score of sexual function ( $p < .001$ ,  $\eta^2_p = .35$ ), all subscales (desire ( $p = .002$ ,  $2 = .20$ ), arousal ( $p = .01$ ,  $2 = .15$ ), lubrication ( $p = .011$ ,  $2 = .15$ ), orgasm ( $p = .007$ ,  $2 = .16$ ), satisfaction ( $p = .023$ ,  $2 = .13$ ), pain ( $p = .02$ ,  $2 = .13$ )) and depression ( $p = .002$ ,  $2 = .20$ ). The interventions had no significant and positive effects on fatigue ( $p = .31$ ,  $2 = .04$ ) sleep complaints ( $p = .079$ ,  $2 = .087$ ), and couple satisfaction ( $p = .69$ ,  $2 = .01$ ) compared with the active control condition.; Aquatic exercise training may improve sexual function among female PwMS, but this requires further examination using a large sample pre-screened for sexual dysfunction. If confirmed, the present findings are of clinical and practical importance for females with MS.

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