



## The benefits of physical activity for depression

### Os benefícios da atividade física na depressão

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#### ABSTRACT

Depression is an affective disorder present throughout human history, characterized by feelings of sadness, pessimism, and low self-esteem. Medical follow-up is essential for proper diagnosis and treatment. It is estimated that more than 300 million people worldwide suffer from depression, which differs from normal mood fluctuations. When chronic and intense, it can cause great suffering and dysfunction, and can even lead to suicide. With an estimated 800,000 deaths annually by suicide, depression is one of the leading causes of death among young people. Regular physical activity is considered by some scientists to be one of the best antidepressants, bringing a number of benefits to mental and emotional health.

**Keywords:** Depression, Mental health, Physical activity.

#### INTRODUCTION

Depression is an affective disorder that has accompanied humanity throughout its history. In the pathological sense, there is the presence of sadness, pessimism, low self-esteem, which appear frequently and can be combined with each other. Medical follow-up is essential for both diagnosis and appropriate treatment.

Depression is a common disorder around the world: it is estimated that more than 300 million people suffer from it. The condition is different from the usual mood fluctuations and

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short-lived emotional responses to the challenges of everyday life. Especially when long-lasting and with moderate or severe intensity, depression can become a critical health condition. It can cause the affected person great distress and dysfunction at work, school, or in the family environment. At its worst, depression can lead to suicide. About 800,000 people die by suicide each year - making it the second leading cause of death among people aged 15 to 29 years (PAHO, 2003).

Physical activity brings with it many benefits and according to some scientists, they already classify physical exercise as one of the best antidepressants.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This is a Literature Review study.

## **RESULTS**

Studies have shown that patients with depression undergoing treatment with psychotherapy responded better to treatment when coupled with moderate physical exercise.

Research published in JAMA Psychiatry in 2022 showed that 11% of depression could be prevented if people were physically active. In 2023, a study from the Journal of Affective Disorders followed 141 patients for 16 weeks and showed that, for depression or pathological anxiety, running twice a week can have a similar effect to that provided by antidepressant and anxiolytic medications. This is because physical activity releases hormones that contribute to the feeling of well-being and increases the availability of serotonin and dopamine, regulating mood and feelings of happiness.

## **CONCLUSION**

Depression is of paramount importance in Public Health and it is necessary to take measures to have greater control over this disease and one of these measures is to do physical activities, which have been proven to help fight it.



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