

Physical Exercise in Forensic Psychiatric Care

Studies on 1) Patients' Performance and Activity levels & 2) Staff's Knowledge and Behaviors

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Background

Exercise protects against cardiovascular disorders, a common comorbidity in patients with severe mental disorder. New research is also recognizing positive effects of exercise on cognitive function and psychiatric symptoms. Bringing exercise into forensic psychiatric care is a novel concept, so far largely underused as a treatment option.

Patients in forensic psychiatric care had alarmingly low maximal oxygen uptake.

Purpose

To assess various physical, psychological and health variables of patients under compulsory forensic psychiatric inpatient care.

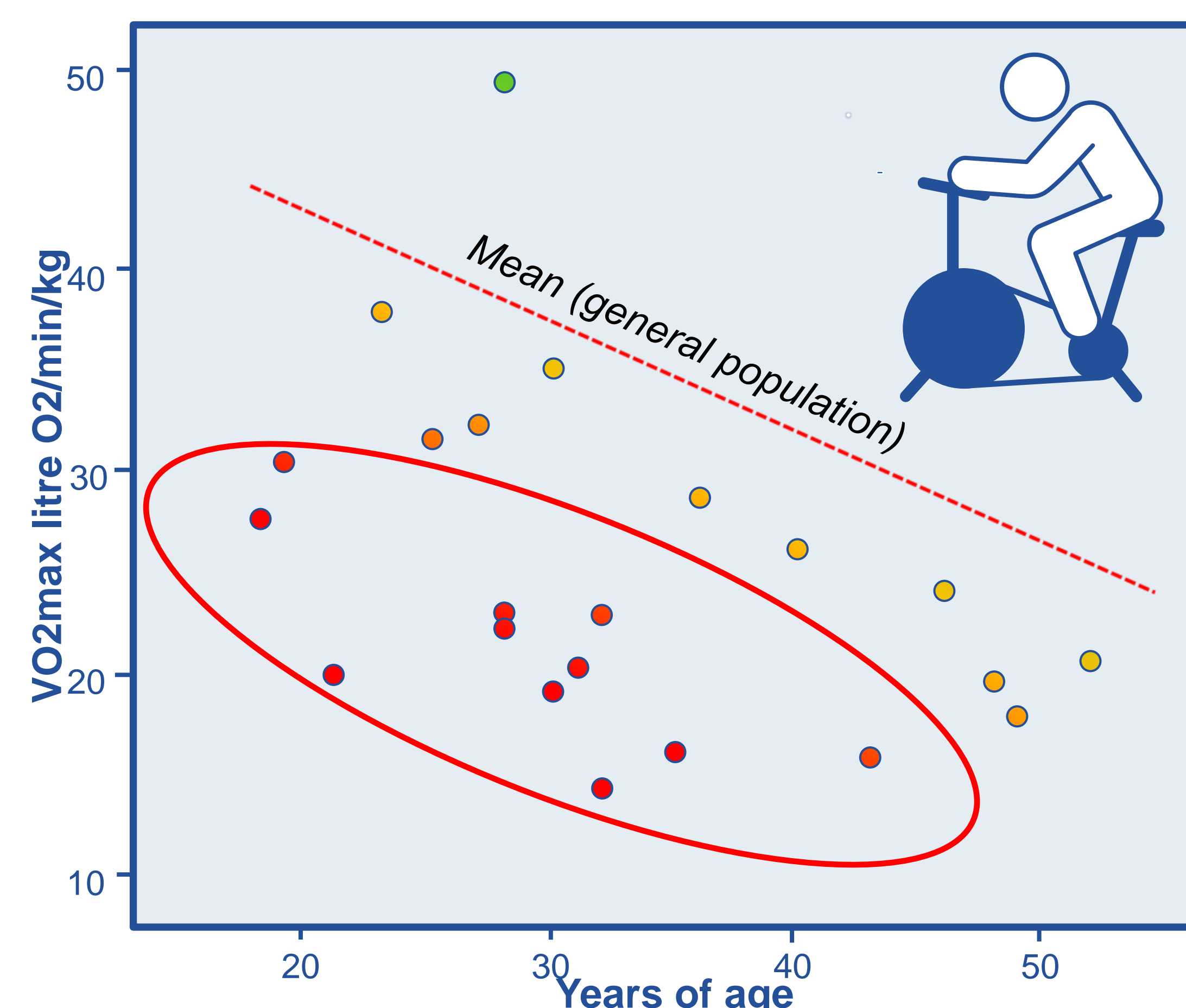
Method

A cross-sectional study (n=28) was performed, including patients in forensic psychiatric inpatient care. Physical tests, measuring strength, walking ability, running speed and maximal oxygen uptake was performed.

Results

Results showed that patients' maximal oxygen uptake was very low. Levels of physical activity varied greatly and up to a third of the included patients did not reach general recommendations (1).

1. Bergman H et al. Physical performance and physical activity of patients under compulsory forensic psychiatric inpatient care. *Physiotherapy Theory and Practice*. 2018:1-9.



Exercise was not used in a structured manner in forensic psychiatric care.

Purpose

To translate, validate and adapt the the Exercise in Mental Health Questionnaire, Health Professionals version (EMIQ-HP) for Swedish conditions, and to describe staff's knowledge, attitudes and behaviours regarding exercise in forensic psychiatric care.

Method

The EMIQ-HP was translated, validated and adapted by expert consensus. The EMIQ-HP was then used to survey knowledge, attitudes and behaviors regarding exercise among staff (n=239) in forensic psychiatric care, throughout Sweden.

Results

Preliminary, results indicate that the Swedish EMIQ-HP can be used with some caution. Preliminary, results also indicate that exercise is regarded as a safe activity with positive health effects for patients. However, exercise seemed solely to be used in an informal manner, largely prescribed by non-specialists and there are few examples of assessments prior to exercise, or evaluations of exercise interventions.