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Title: Long-term adherence to exercise after pulmonary rehabilitation: What are the motivating factors and barriers?

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Body: Introduction: Adherence to exercise after PR is known to be low, but motivation/barriers to exercise in this population are unclear. This study aimed to investigate motivation and barriers to exercise post PR. Method: A postal survey was sent to 112 (58=M) participants who completed >50% of a PR program in the previous three years. Collating demographics, physical activity level, exercise information and participants' views of their motivation (21 items) and barriers (14 items) to exercise, quantified along a 5 point-likert scale. Results: 51.8% (n=58) responded; mean age 71.72, MRC dyspnoea 2.86 and co-morbidities 1.09, COPD=87.9%. Individual's motivation and barrier mean were calculated, but did not correlate, mean barrier did correlated with; MRC (p=0.003), co-morbidities (p<0.001) and intent to exercise (p<0.001). The most frequent (always/often) motivating reasons were; I want to improve my fitness=82.7%; I want to be physically fit=80.4%; I exercise for health concerns=72.6%. Barriers were; shortness of breath=58.4% and lack of energy=52.2%. Significant differences in motivation/barriers were identified between exercisers (\geq once a week most weeks) and non-exercisers, but not time since completion of PR. Preferred options to motivate exercise were; weekly PR group 47.4% and repeat PR yearly 42.1%, those with a higher motivation (p=0.039) or lower barrier (p=0.011) opted for the weekly PR group significantly more. Conclusion: This study quantified motivation/barriers to exercise post-PR identifying many items that significantly differed depending on exercise level; these do not change significantly over time and may predict long-term exercise preference.