



EXERCISE LOWERS DEMENTIA RISK IN OLDER ADULTS; "TREMENDOUS AND FERTILE AREA OF RESEARCH" FOR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY FIELD, SAYS EXPERT

A National Institutes of Health study led by Dr. Eric Larson finds that older adults who exercised at least three times a week were much less likely to develop dementia than those who were less active. While the study does not include a specific developmental disability focus, Dr. James Rimmer, Director of the National Center on Physical Activity and Disability in Chicago points out, "The general area of slowing the rate of decline in cognitive function in persons with intellectual disabilities as with the general population presents a tremendous and fertile area of research." Dementia is of particular concern for persons with developmental disabilities since adults with Down syndrome and head injuries are more prone to dementia forms such as Alzheimer's than the general population. The most common causes of dementia apart from Alzheimer's disease are stroke and related vascular accidents, and neurological diseases such as Parkinson's. Dementia and disability expert, Dr. Matt Janicki of the University of Illinois at Chicago points out, "It is quite possible that exercise can serve as a preventive factor with respect to the onset of dementia. People who exercise regularly will practice other forms of wellness and thus may be less susceptible to cardiovascular problems, among them dementia."

To read "Exercise Is Associated with Reduced Risk for Incident Dementia among Persons 65 Years of Age and Older" in the January 17 issue of the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, visit <http://www.annals.org/cgi/content/full/144/2/73>. To read a press release on this discovery, visit <http://www.nia.nih.gov/NewsAndEvents/PressReleases/PR20060116dementia.htm>

To read a fact sheet on dementia and intellectual disabilities by the Alzheimer's Disease International, visit <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/rrtcamr/dementiaid.pdf>. For a list of useful resources on dementia, visit the AAMR website at http://www.aamr.org/Reading_Room/docs_dementia.shtml and the University of Illinois at Chicago at <http://www.uic.edu/orgs/rrtcamr/dementia.htm>

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