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PHYSICAL SELF CONCEPT AMONG YOUNG WOMEN WITH ENDOMETRIOSIS : is regular physical activity essential ?

Samantha Coquinos, Alexandre Obœuf, Damien Vitiello

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INTRODUCTION

PAIN EXPERIENCE

Pain is defined as an unpleasant sensory and emotional experience associated with, or resembling that associated with, actual or potential tissue damage (IASP). It shows that pain depends in part on the way we perceive it and is affected by our culture and our environment.

In the context of endometriosis, pain is not related with the severity of the disease¹. **This suggests that other mechanisms might be involved in the process of pain including psychological factors.**

PHYSICAL SELF-CONCEPT

Physical self-concept is defined as the perception or evaluation of a person's physical abilities and physical appearance^{2,3}. Correlations have been demonstrated between physical self-concept and mental well-being⁴.

When women with endometriosis feel like their body has lost its functionality and feel unattractive, they show a lower perception of their physical ability and appearance compared to a frame of reference. So, it could be questioned how their physical self-concept could be increased.

BODY PERCEPTION AND ENDOMETRIOSIS

Qualitative studies have demonstrated **that women with endometriosis tend to have their body perception altered by their pathology^{5,6,7}.**

Unpredictable Negative feelings
Unfunctional **BODY PERCEPTION**
Do not fit the norm Unattractive
Losing control

A study stated that women with endometriosis who compare themselves to other women have **more negative feelings towards their body** than the ones who do not compare to others⁵.

PHYSICAL SELF-CONCEPT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

There is a reciprocal relationship between physical self-concept and physical activity⁸.

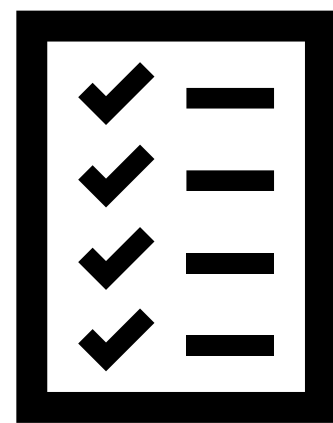


PA seems to play an essential role in physical and psychological well-being that could be helpful in the context of endometriosis.

AIM OF THE STUDY

To assess and compare the physical self-concept score of women with endometriosis performing or not a regular PA.

METHODOLOGY



- French women with endometriosis were asked to complete a questionnaire over physical perception.
- The questionnaire was passed online through a link and on paper at the endometriosis clinic of Paris Saint Joseph hospital.
- The physical self-concept was measured using the short form of the *physical self-description questionnaire*⁹ (PSDQ-S).
- A regular PA was defined as participating to a physical activity at least once per week.

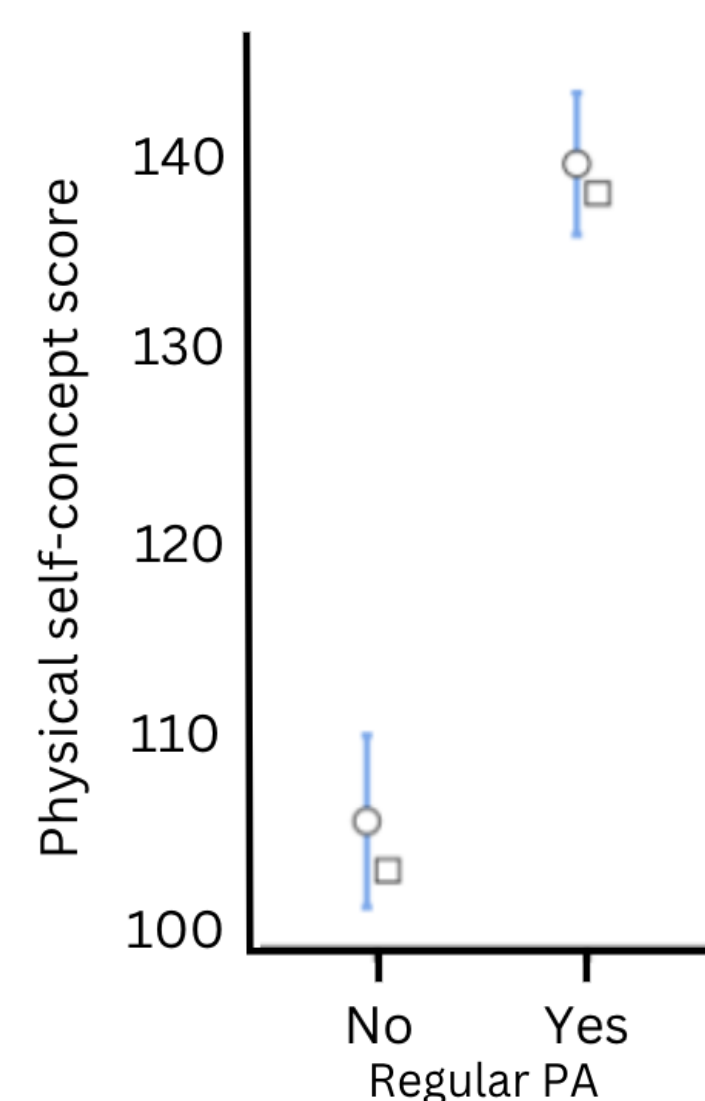
Participants characteristics

Number of participants	418: 289 stated performing a regular PA and 129 did not
Average age	33 years old
Average year of diagnosis	2018

RESULTS



- **The physical self-concept score was significantly higher in the regular PA group compared to the group not performing any regular PA (p<0.05). All the scores for the physical self-concept subscales were significantly higher in the regular PA group compared to the group not performing any regular PA (p<0.05).**



DISCUSSION

The scientific literature has shown that physical self-concept can be increased with PA⁸. This seems to be accurate for women experiencing endometriosis as well. As physical self-concept depends on internal judgement^{2,3}, PA probably promotes positive experiences in which women feel like they keep control of their body.

The PSDQ-S divides the physical self-concept in subscales⁹ that are very different from one another, with for example health, endurance and physical appearance. And yet, **significant differences were found between women with endometriosis practicing a regular PA and women not practicing a regular PA.**

This result highlights how the disease is present in every part of the body image. It is not only the functionality that seems to be altered, but the entire image women have of their body.

To increase their psychological well-being and their quality of life, a PA activity should be recommended to women with endometriosis.

PERSPECTIVES

Results are still being analyzed.

Further analyzes including the comparison of physical self-esteem of women with endometriosis to women without endometriosis.

The effect of different types of PA (relaxation activities, PA with necessary social interactions, PA without necessary interactions) on physical self-concept will be also determined in women performing a regular PA.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

