

Comprehensive physiotherapy exercise program or advice for chronic whiplash (PROMISE): a pragmatic randomized controlled trial

Michaleff, Z.A., Maher, C.G., Lin, C.W.C., Rebbeck, T., Jull, G., Latimer, J., Connelly, L. and Sterling, M., 2014. Comprehensive physiotherapy exercise programme or advice for chronic whiplash (PROMISE): a pragmatic randomised controlled trial. *The Lancet*, 384(9938), pp.133-141.

Setting the scene:

Evidence suggests that brief physiotherapy are as effective for acute whiplash-associated disorders as more comprehensive programs whether this also holds true for chronic whiplash-associated disorders is unknown. So in this RCT aimed to estimate the **effectiveness of a comprehensive exercise program delivered by physiotherapists compared with advice in people with a chronic whiplash-associated disorder.**

What did they do?

PROMISE is a two group, pragmatic randomized controlled trial in patients with **chronic (>3 months and <5 years) grade 1 or 2 whiplash-associated disorder.** The primary outcome was pain intensity measured on a 0–10 scale. Outcomes were measured at baseline, 14 weeks, 6 months, and 12 months by a masked assessor

172 participants were allocated to either the comprehensive exercise program (n=86) or advice group (n=86)

A comprehensive exercise program was not more effective than advice alone for pain reduction in the participants. CNS hyper excitability and symptoms of post-traumatic stress did not modify the effect of treatment.

Takeaway message:

We have shown that simple advice is equally as effective as a more intense and comprehensive physiotherapy exercise program.

Food for thoughts:

Do you think advising your patient with chronic whiplash injury is enough?