

## Eli's Rehab Report

### CLINICAL REHAB ROUNDUP: Ther Ex Not Just for the Physically Injured

The benefits of physical activity for youth with developmental disabilities: a systematic review. Johnson CC. Am J Health Promot. 2009 Jan-Feb;23(3):157-67.

This study analyzed existing evidence on the benefits of physical activity for youth with developmental disabilities. Head researcher, **Connie Johnson, PT, DScPT**, extracted data from systematic reviews using A Measurement Tool to Assess Reviews (AMSTAR) criteria and used Grading of Recommendations, Assessment, Development, Evaluation (GRADE) criteria for observational studies. She also used Population, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome (PICO) criteria to extract all studies, according to the June 5 PT Bulletin Online.

**Findings: Strong evidence indicated that children and adolescents with developmental disabilities benefit from participation in group exercise programs, treadmill training, or therapeutic riding (hippotherapy).**

Some evidence also indicated that adapted skiing or aquatic programs may offer health benefits. Documented benefits of physical activity included improvements in aerobic capacity, improved gross motor function, and high levels of participant/parent satisfaction.

Johnson concluded that there's sound evidence that physical activity is beneficial for youth with developmental disabilities. However, further research studies are needed "that are of greater scientific rigor," she indicated.

This means larger sample sizes, control groups, and stringent, replicable methodology, according to the abstract.