

The effectiveness of health coaching in physiotherapy: an updated systematic review

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Key words: exercise therapy, physical therapy modalities, health promotion, motivational interviewing.

Introduction: Health coaching is an intervention recently introduced in the physiotherapy field to prevent and control the risk of non-communicable diseases and improve the health of patients. The interest in this approach is evidenced by the growing number of clinical trials conducted, which makes it necessary to update secondary studies aimed at summarizing the degree of evidence currently available.

Methods: The search was performed on MEDLINE and PEDro, using the same strategy as in a previous systematic review. For this reason, the time frame was limited between 26 May 2018, the date on which the screening of the previous systematic review (Rethorn, 2019) ended, and 16 March 2022. The objective of the search strategy used, was to identify clinical randomized controlled trials analyzing the effects of health coaching strategies provided by physiotherapists. Two reviewers independently selected the eligible articles through an analysis of the titles, abstracts and full-texts, based on the predetermined inclusion criteria. The methodological quality of the studies was assessed using the PEDro scale. Data extracted into an Excel spreadsheet included: author and year, purpose, study design, sample, details of the health coaching intervention, area of health behavior change, outcome variables, and main findings.

Results: Nine articles met all inclusion criteria and were analyzed. In 7 of the 9 articles included (78%) in this study, the intervention strategies resulted in a positive outcome in the behavioral, physiological and/or psychological area, compared to the control group.

Conclusions: This study confirmed that the primary studies concerning the effectiveness of health coaching interventions provided by physiotherapists were conducted with heterogeneous methods and outcome measures. In particular, a more detailed description of the methods of administering the interventions by the authors is hoped in the future. However, the data indicate encouraging and statistically significant results in some outcomes related to the behavioral, physiological, and psychological domains.

Bibliography: [1] Rethorn ZD, Pettitt CD. What Is the Effect of Health Coaching Delivered by Physical Therapists? A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials. *Phys Ther.* 2019 Oct 28;99(10):1354-1370. doi: 10.1093/ptj/pzz098. PMID: 31309976.

