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Do pedometers with or without education on exercise increase functional walking capacity and physical activity level in adolescents with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis

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To evaluate the impact of pedometer use on the Physical Activity (PA) and Functional Walking Capacity (FWC) of adolescents with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) and Lower Extremity (LE) involvement. Twenty-seven adolescents, ages 11-19 years with JIA and LE involvement participated in the 3-phase pedometer study that introduced the use of a pedometer and an education seminar at 6 weeks. Measurements were taken at the baseline first visit and at weeks 6, 12 and 20. The primary outcome measure was the 6-minute walk test (6MWT). Thirteen completed the study. Six-minute walk distance (6MWD) significantly increased from baseline (458.0 ± 70.8 m) to the end of phase 1 (501.4 ± 59.8 m) ($p = 0.035$), prior to receiving the pedometer; and from baseline to the end of study ($p=0.0037$). No significant changes in 6MWD were found between weeks 6 and 12 (intervention) ($p=0.77$) or between weeks 12 and 20 (follow through phase) ($p=0.27$). In adolescents with LE JIA, consistent guidance and support by rheumatology professionals appears to positively influence PA and measures of FWC as seen through improved 6MWD. There was insufficient evidence to show that pedometers further increased FWC or PA.

Biography

Jill Blitz has been a Physical Therapist for 17 years, with the last 15 providing service at Children's Hospital Los Angeles Division of Pediatric Medicine outpatient and rheumatology clinics. Her research has focused on exercise in adolescents with rheumatologic involvement, which has led her to speak at multiple national and community conferences, including the American College of Rheumatology Scientific Meeting and the APTA Combined Sections Meeting. She has also taught a continuing education course on physical therapy for children with rheumatic diagnoses. One of her many goals include finding ways to get kids of all abilities to be more active.

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