International Essential Tremor Foundation-funded Researchers Prove Resistance Training Benefits Dexterity in Essential Tremor Patients

Recent research shows resistance training is a viable therapy for improving upper limb-function in individuals with the most common neurological movement disorder.

Lenexa, KS (PRWEB) April 01, 2014 -- A recent International Essential Tremor Foundation funded study shows resistance training to be a viable therapy for individuals with essential tremor (ET). A team of researchers from Griffith University and Bond University identified that a generalized resistance training program for the upper limb is capable of improving manual dexterity in individuals with ET, and to a lesser extent, reduce abduction force tremor.

ET is the most common neurological movement disorder causing tremors in various parts of the body—usually the arms, head and vocal chords. The condition is often characterized by rhythmic, involuntary and uncontrollable shaking of the hands and arms during movement, making daily tasks such as eating, drinking and writing difficult if not impossible. ET patients can exhibit increased postural, kinetic, and intention tremors which often result in a decreased quality of life. At this time there is no cure for essential tremor.

“Given that resistance training (RT) can reduce tremor amplitude and improve upper limb fine motor control in older adults, it is surprising that few studies have explored RT as a therapy for older adults with ET,” said Dr. Justin Keogh, Faculty of Health Sciences and Medicine of Bond University.

Keogh and his research team compared healthy, older adults living with ET to those without ET through function tests to assess activities common to everyday life. After a six week resistance training program involving dumbbell bicep curl, wrist flexion and wrist extension exercises, functions test results significantly improved.

Results demonstrate that a simple dumbbell-based resistance training program had many significant benefits for older adults, with and without essential tremor. Results indicated that both groups of older adults can significantly improve many real-world measures of manual dexterity, with such changes appearing to reflect some of the significant improvements in the postural and force tremor tasks assessed. The greatest benefits following resistance training were gained for the limb most affected due to the disorder. Overall, resistance training appears to be a viable therapy for improving upper limb-function in individuals with ET.

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About The International Essential Tremor Foundation:
Headquartered in Lenexa, KS, and founded in 1988, the International Essential Tremor Foundation is the leading organization in the world dedicated to those affected by essential tremor. The mission of the IETF is to fund research that will find the cause of essential tremor and lead to better treatments and a cure, increase
awareness about ET, and provide educational materials, tools and support to healthcare providers, the public, and those directly affected by ET.

The IETF has distributed more than $685,000 in research grants, to fund 27 promising studies, in the search for the cause of ET. The Foundation has hosted numerous community awareness events across the U.S. to provide those affected with the basic knowledge necessary to become their own advocate when seeking treatment. And, the IETF also provides assistance to a vast network of support groups around the world. To learn more about essential tremor and the IETF mission, visit the IETF website at www.essentialtremor.org.
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