Evidence Shows Exercise Can Help Treat Addiction; Novus Medical Detox Center Cites Value of Sports in Drug Rehab

Research studies and anecdotal reports support the benefits of physical activity in treating substance use disorders, leading Novus Medical Detox Center to advocate for the inclusion of exercise and sports in drug treatment programs.

NEW PORT RICHEY, FLA (PRWEB) August 01, 2016 -- Numerous studies have indicated that exercise-based interventions show promise in treating drug addiction and dependency (1, 2), prompting the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to invest more than $4.3 million in research funding (3). Former substance abusers have also attested to the effectiveness of sports and exercise in helping them to overcome addiction and stay drug-free (4, 5, 6). Novus Medical Detox Center, a leading Florida-based drug treatment facility, believes these findings create a compelling case for incorporating athletic activities into alcohol and drug treatment programs.

Researchers from the University of Virginia and Davidson College have published comprehensive reviews of epidemiological, preclinical and clinical studies that explore the use of exercise in treating substance use and abuse (1, 2). While they acknowledge further clinical research is necessary to determine causal effects and identify parameters to maximize the benefits of physical activity (1), they have concluded exercise “may be a useful tool for treating drug addiction,” noting that it has the potential to “prevent drug use initiation through interactions with dopamine in the reward pathway” and “prevent relapse through interactions with glutamate, dopamine and chromatin” (2). New evidence may soon follow, as NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow has committed to supporting “groundbreaking research on the neurobiological, psychological and social processes by which exercise may promote overall well-being and protect against drug abuse and addiction” (3).

Kent Runyon, Vice President of Community Relations and Chief Strategy and Compliance Officer for Novus Medical Detox Center, is encouraged by firsthand accounts from recovering addicts and alcoholics who affirm that sports and exercise have helped them get clean and abstain from further substance abuse. Novus recently published a feature story on a formerly homeless drug abuser who completed drug rehab, got involved with Street Soccer USA and credits the community sports organization as “one of the pillars of his recovery” (4).

Others have shared similar success stories based on their experience with organizations such as Phoenix Multisport, a sober support community that sponsors group athletic activities such as hiking, climbing, biking, yoga and strength training (5), and Racing for Recovery, a support group that aims to prevent substance abuse by promoting a lifestyle of fitness and health (6). In addition, a growing number of drug rehab and recovery clinics, such as the Betty Ford Center, include fitness as a mandatory component of their treatment programs (6).

“Physical activity can benefit people with substance use disorders in a variety of ways,” explained Runyon. “Not only does it provide an outlet to relieve boredom, stress, anxiety and anger—which lead many to turn to drugs and alcohol in the first place—but it also releases endorphins, which activate the body’s opiate receptors and can create a natural ‘high.’ Just as importantly, group sports can help those struggling with addiction to form healthier social relationships. Many who relapse do so because their friends are still using. Establishing new friendships with others who are committed to sobriety can greatly improve their chances of a successful, long-term recovery.”
Runyon encourages individuals battling addiction and dependency to complete a detox program, which will help wean them off drugs or alcohol and enable the body to heal from its damaging effects. They can then enroll in drug rehab or a recovery support program, which may include exercise as a part of the treatment or provide referrals to local sports and fitness groups. Ultimately, Runyon sees group athletic activities as an effective way to achieve and maintain a healthy, drug-free lifestyle.

Novus offers medically supervised alcohol and drug detox programs that minimize the discomfort of withdrawal and have helped many patients overcome substance use disorders. The Florida detox facility offers individually customized treatment plans that include fluid replenishment, natural supplements, nutritious food and 24-hour access to nursing care. Patients are also encouraged to use the onsite gym with cardio equipment, participate in lawn games such as bean bag toss and take walks through the landscaped grounds. Novus is acclaimed for its success in treating high-dose methadone cases, and is equally proficient in detoxing patients from alcohol and other high-dose drugs just as comfortably, safely and effectively.

For more information on Novus Medical Detox Center and its alcohol and drug detox programs, visit www.novusdetox.com.

About Novus Medical Detox Center:
Novus Medical Detox Center has earned The Joint Commission’s Gold Seal of Approval for Behavioral Health Care Accreditation as an inpatient medical detox facility. Licensed by the Florida Department of Children and Families, Novus provides safe, effective alcohol and drug treatment programs that are based on proven medical protocols and designed to minimize the discomfort of withdrawal. The facility is located on 3.25 acres in New Port Richey, Florida, in a tranquil, spa-like setting bordering protected conservation land. Intent on proving that detox doesn’t have to be painful or degrading, Novus set out to transform the industry by bringing humanity into medical detox with individually customized treatment programs and 24/7 access to nursing care and withdrawal specialists. Today, Novus is renowned as a champion of industry standardization and a staunch advocate of patients fighting to overcome substance use disorders. Frequently recognized for its contributions to the industry and local community, Novus has become a regular source to media publications such as The Wall Street Journal and USA Today, and has ranked in the Tampa Bay Business Journal’s Fast 50, the Florida Business Journal’s Top 500 and the Inc. 5000 list of America’s fastest-growing companies. For more information on Novus’ medically supervised detox programs, visit http://novusdetox.com.


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