Improvements in Markers of Fragility and Motor Function after 8-weeks of Resistance Training with Instability and/or Cadence Walking in Persons with Mild to Moderate Parkinson’s Disease

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ABSTRACT
In persons with Parkinson’s disease (PD), resistance training with instability (RTI) and cadence walking (CW) are effective in improving markers of fragility and motor function. A combination of RTI and CW and its potential added effects on fragility and motor function has not been studied. PURPOSE: to examine the effects of RTI, CW and RTI+CW on markers of fragility (grip strength, walking speed and variability, upper and lower body strength and endurance) and motor function in individuals with PD. METHODS: individuals diagnosed with mild to moderate PD (N=10 (1 female,9 males); Hoehn and Yahr (MHY) stage=1.5 ± 0.4; age=66 ± 12 y; BMI = 28.10 ± 2.5 kg/m²) were randomized into RTI, CW or RTI+CW exercise groups for 8-weeks. RTI and CW were performed 3 days/week and RTI+CW was performed 4 days/week (2 days RTI and 2 days CW). RTI included full-body machine and free-weight exercises with volume (reps and sets) and instability progressions. CW included volume (time) and intensity progressions. RESULTS: stride to stride variability improved significantly more in RTI+CW versus CW alone (3.28 ± 1.94 in and 0.79 ± 0.28 in, P=0.007). The RTI group increased stride length significantly more than the RTI+CW group (6.04 ± 0.96 in, 5.96 ± 0.75 in, P=0.032). The RTI group increased upper body strength significantly more than CW (26.25 ± 19.74 lbs, 5.00 ± 8.66 lbs, P=0.046). There were significant pre- and post-improvements in distance of the 6-minute walk (1691 ± 456 ft, 1913 ± 374 ft, P=0.012), stride velocity (1.04 ± 0.14 m/s, 0.97 ± 0.12 m/s, P=0.11), steps per minute (116.91 ± 15.12 spm, 125.38 ± 15.73 spm, P=0.009), stride-to-stride variability (4.21 ± 2.68 in, 1.97 ± 1.51 in, P=0.028), arm swing of the affected side (7.44 ± 4.92 in, 14.40 ± 5.52 in, P=0.003), Berg Balance scale (51.90 ± 2.85, 54.20 ± 2.70, P=0.005), leg press (250 ± 68.80, 304 ± 78.20, P=0.001), chest press (78.50 ± 23.10 lbs, 96.50 ± 26.67 lbs, P=0.006) and hand grip of the affected side (34.00 ± 11.36 kg, 37.60 ± 10.48 kg, P=0.010). CONCLUSION: after 8-weeks of RTI, CW or RTI+CW, all exercise groups significantly improved endurance, stride velocity and variability, upper and lower body strength, arm swing in affected side and balance. RTI+CW may be more effective than CW alone in preventing falls in persons with PD due to the significant improvement in stride-to-stride variability.