

Exercise Barriers of Knee Osteoarthritis Patients during COVID-19 Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

Knee osteoarthritis (KOA) is a common and debilitating condition. Though exercise is considered as first-line evidence-based treatment for KOA, physical inactivity is common among KOA patients and the prevalence could be up to 70%. It is worried that widespread precautionary measures during COVID-19 pandemic would further hinder KOA patients from participating exercises. Our study aims to investigate the exercise situation of KOA patients during COVID-19 period, which might shed light on the provision of KOA care under the pandemic.

OBJECTIVES

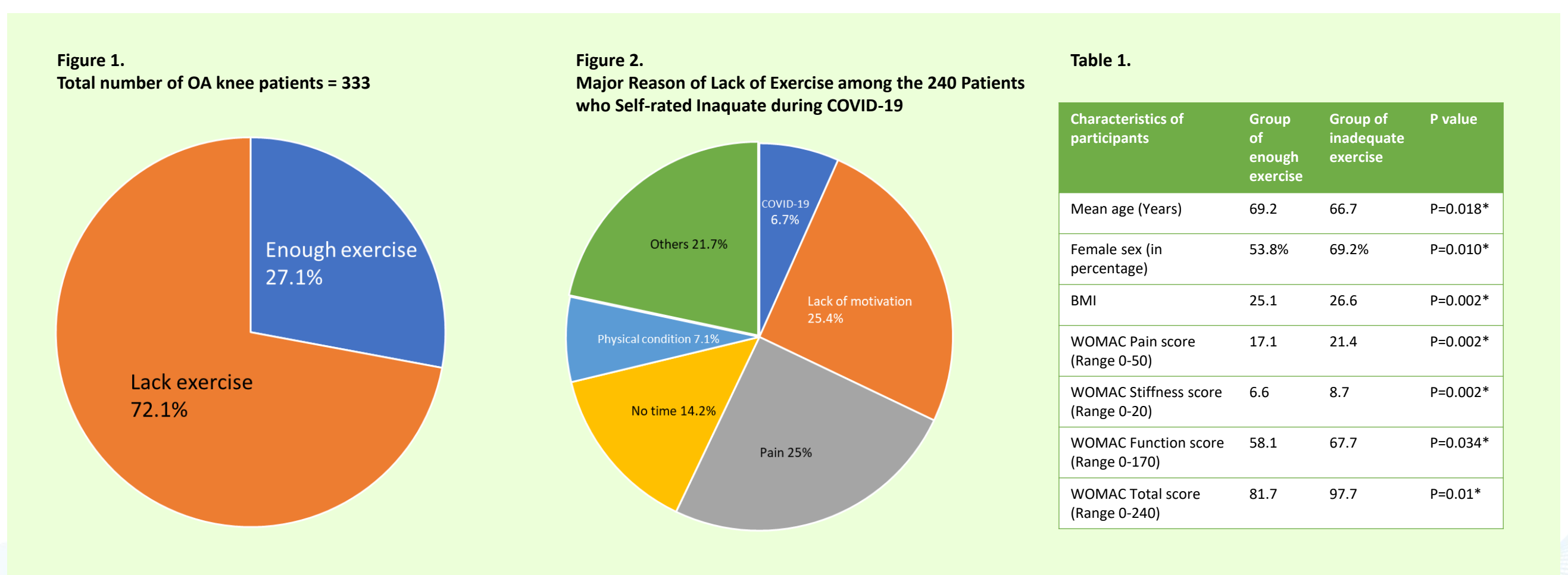
To evaluate the exercise barriers in KOA patients during COVID-19 pandemic by assessing their self-perception of exercise level and barriers to exercise.

METHODOLOGY

KOA patients who attended Family Medicine Specialist Clinic of Prince of Wales Hospital were recruited. Baseline characteristics including demographics, Kellgren-Lawrence (KL) grades of knee X-Rays and symptom score using the Chinese version of Western Ontario and McMaster Universities Arthritis Index (WOMAC® 3.1) questionnaire were collected. Patients were asked to self-rate whether they had enough level of exercise and choose their major barriers to exercise during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RESULTS

- 333 patients were recruited from May to August 2020.
- 240 (72.1%) patients indicated they lack exercise during COVID-19 pandemic (Figure 1). The major exercise barriers were shown in Figure 2.
- 117 (35.1%) were male and 216 (64.9%) were female with mean age of 67.36 ± 8.74 . The mean BMI was 26.22 ± 4.11 and mean WOMAC scores was 93.3 ± 50.9 .
- Table 1 showed significant differences between the 2 groups. There was no significant difference in KL grades of anteroposterior view ($P=0.298$) and skyline view ($P=0.820$) of knee X-Rays between 2 groups.



CONCLUSION

This study showed that most KOA patients thought that they lacked exercise during COVID-19 pandemic. The top barriers to exercise were lack of motivation and pain. With the problems of social and physical distancing measures, innovative strategies might be needed to motivate KOA patients to exercise during COVID-19 period.