Exercise testing and training in cystic fibrosis clinics in the United Kingdom: A 10 year update

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OBJECTIVES: Regular exercise testing, particularly cardiopulmonary exercise testing (CPET), is recommended best practice in the United Kingdom (UK) for people with cystic fibrosis (pwCF), as is providing and regularly reviewing training programmes. This study aimed to ascertain exercise testing and training practices the UK, as well as any barriers/facilitators to implementation a decade on from the last review.

METHODS: An online survey (Qualtrics XM; Provo, Utah, USA) was distributed electronically to healthcare professionals involved in exercise management of pwCF in the UK via professional networks.

RESULTS: 31 CF centres participated (11 adult, 16 paediatric, 4 combined), 24 of which were specialist, and 7 were networked clinics. Of these, 94% reported using exercise testing (vs. 53% in 2010). The six-minute walk test was the most used exercise test (used in 55% of centres), whilst 48% are using CPET. Exercise testing most commonly occurred at annual review (93%) and was typically supervised by physiotherapists (62%). Space was the main barrier to exercise testing (31% of centres). For exercise training, all centres discussed this with pwCF (vs. 82% in 2010); with 94% doing so at every clinic appointment. Physiotherapists predominantly undertake these discussions (74%), with staff training and availability cited as common barriers to subsequent implementation of training programmes.

CONCLUSIONS: The present data provides a contemporary insight into UK clinical exercise testing and training practice for pwCF, a decade on from when last surveyed. Encouragingly, more clinical exercise testing and exercise counselling appears to be taking place, perhaps reflecting increased understanding of the benefits of exercise across the CF community as well as recent published guidance. This survey provides evidence with which to standardise further exercise services for pwCF.

1896/2000 CHARACTERS