

The Effect of Tai Chi Chuan on Confidence and Lower Extremity Strength and Balance in Residents Living Independently at a Continuing Care Retirement Community

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This study examined the effect of Tai Chi Chuan (TC) on lower extremity strength and balance and confidence in performing daily activities. Residents ($n = 77$) living independently in a continuing care retirement community were randomized to early or late TC instructional groups. The late group served as the control for the first 20 weeks. Measures of strength, balance, and confidence were assessed at baseline, 10, 20, and 40 weeks. There were no statistically significant differences between the groups at baseline in mean number of chronic illnesses, medications, falls, and activities of daily living. Repeated-measures analyses revealed significant improvement for the early and late groups during their respective periods of TC instruction, but not otherwise. Confidence ratings were unaffected. The early group's improvement at 20 weeks regressed to the mean baseline score by 40 weeks, suggesting that continued exercise is necessary to maintain gains in strength and balance.