**Abstract:** Introduction: The world population is aging rapidly, with increasing longevity, it's social, financial and health consequences can not be ignored. In addition to an increase of many age related physical illnesses, this demographic change will also lead to an increase in a number of mental health problems in older adults. Therefore, any health promotion approach that could facilitate introduction of effective primary, secondary and even tertiary prevention strategies in old age psychiatry would be of significant importance. This paper explores physical activity as one of possible health promotion strategies and has positive effect on mental health in later life.

Methods: In this field Trial, 400 male and female aged 60 years and older were randomly allocated into case and control group. The subjects were excluded if they exercised regularly or had some problems that couldn't do exercise or be absent more than 3 sessions during the intervention. 28 were excluded and 372 (181 case, 191 control) involved the study. Exercise program (two 30-45 minute sessions weekly for 2 months) was assigned for case group. Some practical problems made subjects into two groups, individual physical activity (n= 96) and group physical activity (n= 85). 28-item General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-28) was administered in order to obtain information on mental health. The results were followed up for 3 months. The data was analyzed with spss (version 11.5) statistical software and chi-square, paired-t test, independent-t test and wilcoxon test was used.

Results: The mean of GHQ total scale decreased in case group (before=8, after=5.6) and this changes remained significant after 3 months (The mean after 3 months = 5.6, p < .001). GHQ subscales Somatization (before=2.2, after=1.5), Anxiety (before=2, after=1.5), social dysfunction (before=1.9, after=1.4) and Depression (before=1.8, after=1.3) decreased in case group and as we said in tables all of these changes remained significant after 3 months. In addition there were significant difference between Mental health benefits in Subjects with group physical activity and individual physical activity and doing exercise with a group is more effective.

Conclusion: This study showed Physical activity is an effective intervention and significantly improved mental health in older adults, but if be done with a group especially in same age it has more benefits.