The Benefits of Physical Activity and Exercise for Health

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to identify the benefits of physical activity and exercise for health. Physical activity and exercises are supposed to reduce the risk of several chronic diseases (e.g., cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis) and premature death. Reviewed literature explored that youth who participate in physical activity and exercise are more likely to report good general health and more likely to have no feasible serious mental illness. The findings of this study revealed that regular physical activity and exercise leads to improve health wellbeing.

INTRODUCTION

"Lack of activity destroys the good condition of every human being, while movement and methodical physical exercise save it and preserve it."

Plato

In globalisation, physical inactivity is now recognised as the fourth leading risk factor for increasing the morality rate as well as increase the risk of various communicable diseases. In this context, it is widely recognised that regular physical activity and exercise reduces the risk of pre-mature death. Additionally, physical activity lowers risk factors of various chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, hypertension, obesity, depression and osteoporosis (Uusitupa et al., 2000). Physical activity and exercise as an important part of a healthy lifestyle and recent scientific evidence has reported that regular physical activity and exercise to a wide range of physical as well as mental health benefits. Previous literature has demonstrated that strong relationship between physical activity and risk for several chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, hypertension, non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis, and colon cancer (Caspersen et al., 1985). In fact, researchers recommended that 12 percent of the total number of annual deaths in the United States is attributable to a lack of regular physical activity (Cooper, 1996). Moreover, physical activity and regular exercise play a vital role to the physical and mental health of all ages. Being physically active can help you carry on to do the belongings you enjoy and stay independent as you age. Regular physical activity and exercise over long periods of time can produce long-term health reimbursement. So, health experts say that older adults should be active every day that facilitate to maintain their health. Besides this, physical activity and regular exercise can reduce the risk of diseases and disabilities that develop as people grow older. Exercise is an effective treatment for many chronic conditions. For instance, arthritis, heart disease, or diabetes benefit from regular exercise. Exercise also helps people with high blood pressure, balance problems, or difficulty walking. Physical activity and exercise makes a huge contribution to the lives of individuals. The benefits of physical activity and exercise include the well-being/happiness of individuals taking part, improved physical and mental health. Thus, the purpose of this study is to explore the benefits of physical activity and exercise for health.

REVIEWED LITERATURE

Physical Activity

Physical activity can be considered as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that require energy expenditure (Westerterp, 2013). The amount of energy requisite to accomplish an activity can be measured in kilojoules (kJ) or kilocalories (kcal); 4.184 kJ is fundamentally equal to 1 kcal (1). In particular the kJ is preferred as it is a measure of energy expenditure, on the other hand, traditionally the kcal, a measure of heat, has been used more frequently (Caspersen et al., 1985). There are various techniques for the assessment of physical activity ranging from behavioural observation and self-report to motion sensors (Westerterp, 2013). Some of the physical activity can have a number of diverse physical outcomes. For instances, running and cycling increase aerobic fitness or stamina; weight training or using resistance bands increase muscle strength; yoga and stretching exercises increase flexibility and balance. In the present study, physical activity categorised into two terms i.e. aerobic activities and non-aerobic activities. Aerobic-activities mean light to vigorous-intensity physical activity that requires more oxygen than inactive behaviour and thus promotes cardiovascular fitness and other health benefits like jumping rope, biking, swimming, running; playing soccer, basketball, or volleyball. Anaerobic-activities mean intense physical activity that is short in duration and requires a breakdown of energy sources in the absence of sufficient oxygen. Energy sources are refilled as an individual recovers from the activity. Anaerobic activity includes sprinting during running, swimming, or biking need maximal performance during the concise period.

Exercise

Any physical activity could be considered exercise, but when talk about doing exercise, it usually mean activities that do purposely for fitness or training, rather than something that's part of our daily routine. In other words, exercise is a subset of physical activity i.e. planned, structured, and repetitive. Exercise is often related with maintenance or improvement of
physical fitness (Bherer et al. 2013). There are various kinds of exercise such as Calisthenics, Flexibility (Stretching), Isokinetic, Isotonic, Muscle-fitness. Calisthenics means isotonic muscle-fitness exercise that overloads muscles by forcing the muscles to work at a higher level than usual. Flexibility (Stretching) means exercise designed to stretch muscles and tendons to increase joint flexibility or range of motion. Specific flexibility exercises need to be done for each part of the body. Isokinetic refers to as a muscle-fitness exercise in which the amount of force equals the amount of resistance, so that no movement occurs. Isotonic is defined as a muscle-fitness exercise in which the amount of force exerted is constant throughout the range of motion, namely, muscle shortening (concentric contractions), and muscle lengthening (eccentric contractions). Lastly, muscle-fitness is also known as progressive resistance exercise (PRE). It can be considered as an exercise designed to build muscle strength and endurance by overloading the muscles. Common forms of muscle fitness exercise involve isokinetic, isotonic, and isotonic.

Health

This concept was originated in 1948. According to WHO, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity". Physical health means adequate body weight, height and circumference as per age and sex with acceptable level of vision, hearing, locomotion or movements, acceptable levels of pulse rate, blood pressure, and respiratory rate. Mental health refers to as a state of well being in which the individual recognises his or her own abilities. Social wellbeing includes inter-relation and interaction of human beings. In the same vein, health means sound body and sound mind and sound function of the body. Different experts have defined the term health in different ways: An expert in anatomy define healthy body means it should confirm to normal anatomical structures; a physiologist viewed that health means normal body functions; a biochemist- it means normal biochemical levels / values; a pathologist, health means normal cellular make up; a geneticist viewed that health means correct existence of genetic potential; a psychiatrist -health means well adjusted and a balanced personality.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, EXERCISE AND HEALTH

In the present era, physical activity and exercise have a great importance. It is good for health and fitness, it is great pleasurable. In other words, we can say that physical activity and exercise which, through casual or organised participation, maintain or improve physical fitness and provide amusement to participants. Although, there is an explicit considerate that physical activity and exercise have positive health benefits through the reduction of chronic diseases and the improvement of physical and mental health. There is growing evidence that strong empirical and theoretical links between physical activity and positive health related outcomes (Frietas et al., 2014). Besides this, regular participation in physical activity and exercise are associated with a longer and better quality of life, reduced risks of a variety of diseases and many psychological and emotional benefits. Researchers such as Downward and Rasicute (2015); Cicognani et al. (2014) and Casey et al. (2011) showing that inactivity is one of the most significant causes of death, disability and reduced quality of life in the developed world. Physical activity and exercise may influence the physical health of youth. First, it can influence the causes of disease during childhood and youth. Evidence suggests a positive relationship between physical activity and a mass of factors that affecting physical health, such as diabetes, blood pressure and the ability to use fat for energy. Second, physical activity could reduce the risk of chronic diseases. Also, regular activity beginning in childhood helps to improve bone health. There is also seems to be a general trend towards increased childhood obesity in several countries. Obesity in childhood is known to have significant impact on both physical and mental health, including hypertension and abnormal glucose tolerance. Physical activity considered as a vital aspect of a weight control programme for youths, increase caloric expenditure and promoting fat reduction. Moreover, there has been evidence of disturbingly high rates of mental ill-health among adolescents and even younger children, ranging from low-self-esteem, anxiety and depression to eating disorders, substance abuse and suicide. Research suggests two ways in which physical activities can contribute to mental health in youths. Firstly, there is fairly reliable evidence that regular activity can have a positive impact on psychological well-being. Secondly, research has indicated that physical activity can contribute to the reduction of problematic levels of anxiety and depression (WHO). Hence, the physical activity and exercise can influence the physical and mental health of youth.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Physical activity and exercise as a vehicle for improving health (Downward and Rasicute, 2015; Skille and Solbakken, 2011). Participation of Physical activity and exercise increases cardiovascular performance and respiratory fitness (Sofi et al., 2008; Steyn et al., 2005); improves muscular strength, bone health and reduces hip and spinal cord fractures, colon and other cancers (Bauman et al., 2005; Warburton et al., 2007); improves health by reducing Type II diabetes (Cook et al., 2008; Gill and Cooper, 2008) and also enhance psychological well-being by reducing depression (Chalder et al., 2012; Krogh et al., 2011; Mead et al., 2009; Farmer et al., 1988). Warburton et al. (2006) viewed that exercise is an effective tool in the management of diabetes. They also explored that walking at least 2 hours per week leads to lessen the incidence of premature death of 39%–54% from any cause and of 34%–53% from cardiovascular disease among patients with diabetes. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of obesity (Penedo and Dahn, 2005). Physical activity or exercise programs influences on emotional well-being. Physical activity and exercise as part of their lifestyle that facilitate to lessen the negative impact of aging on the body as well as the mind (Bherer et al. 2013). Various literatures revealed that physical activity improves mood and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety (Ross and Hayes, 1988; Stephens, 1988). Further, physical activity and exercise in modern society has begun to gain great importance in the development of quality of life. Moreover, the significant effects of regular physical activity on health in modern era. Exercise is considered as the first step in lifestyle alterations for the prevention and management of chronic diseases. According to a US Department of Health and Human Services report on physical activity, regular exercise positively leads to reduce causes of mortality by up to 30% for men and women (DHHS, 2002). Besides this, Steptoe and Butler (1996) revealed that dynamic exercise participation related to lower emotional distress as well as depression. While leisure physical activity positively leads to better mental health, including fewer symptoms of both anxiety and depression (Stephens 1988). Thirlaway and Benton (1992) indicated that fitness related with exercise habits such that highly fit subjects who do not exercise had poorer health status than all others. Additionally, the major implications of this study are that to develop a workplace culture and environment that supports and
motivates employees to be physically active. Further, all health practitioners should be fully informed about the benefits of physical activity for both physical and psychological wellbeing. Furthermore, all health practitioners should be encouraged to become physically active themselves, both for their personal self-care and as role models. Workshop, seminars should be organised in order to aware the individuals regarding the benefits of physical activity and exercise. Besides this, one of the main limitations of the current study is that it is conceptual in nature, which needs to be empirically tested in future. Secondly, it focuses on influence of physical activity and exercise sports on health. Future research should also explore the impact of physical education and sports on health, society, and education.

REFERENCES


