

Physical Activity and Mental Health: A Holistic Approach



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What's in This Paper for You?



- Being Physically Active Boosts Mental Health
- Highlights of Physical Activity and Mental Health Research
- Suggested Strategies Towards Promotion of Holistic Health

Physical Activity and Mental Health



- The links between mental and physical health are well known, and the WHO/EU go so far as to say;
“There is no health without mental health”
- It also works the other way so that mental health is affected by physical health
- The guidance for anxiety disorders and depression includes physical exercise as an evidence based intervention for mild depression

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- Physical activities Influence on Mental Health
 - decreased stress, decreased anxiety,
 - decreased depression,
 - increased positive mood, and
 - increased cognitive function
- Evidence of benefit associated in the area of the relationship between physical activity is measured through fitness level or activity level and mental health (depressive symptoms).

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- Thus, physical activity alters brain chemistry and leads to feelings of wellbeing.
- Physical activity is the broad and organized concept around which more specific activities can be arranged.
- Physical activity, performed as sport and exercise can also be understood within the context of leisure, recreation and active living.



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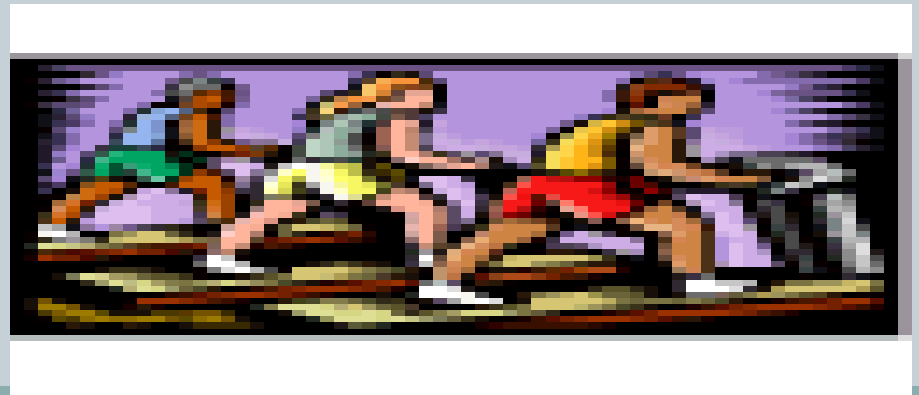


- Activities may include, for example, walking, jogging, calisthenics, golf, or swimming
- Other domains include occupational physical activity (general labour tasks); transportation physical activity (cycling or walking); and domestic physical activity (household chores: sweeping floors or washing windows), or gardening

Research perspective



- It is preventative and curative strategy to combating mental illness and in promoting positive mental health.
- Being physically and active boosts mental health, thus, when people are physically active it become a regular part of their lifestyle which can positively influence their mental health.



Epidemiology of physical activity



- Recommendation for Physical activity participation: adults- at least 30 minutes of accumulated moderate intensity exercise (for example walking or cycling), on all or most days of the week
- A total of 150 minutes per week in moderate physical activity was determined “sufficient” for health



Physical activity benefits to physical health



- Protective effects of varying strength between physical activity and risk for several chronic diseases, including coronary heart disease, hypertension
- Reduce all-causes mortality
- Prevent and aid the control of diabetes and osteoporosis, and to reduce the risk of some cancers and high cholesterol
- Prevention of colon cancer
- Prevention of type 2 diabetes

Physical activity benefits to mental health



- Mental health is improved in the physically active, who experience less stress, anxiety and depression
- Also influence on cognitive function, self-esteem and mood.

Highlight of Physical Activity and Mental Health Research



- Cognitive function:
Performing moderate intensity physical activity for 30–40 minutes a day, 3–4 days per week will push back cognitive decline by 10–15 years.
- Physical Activity: aerobic physical activities
- Anxiety, aerobically for 10–15 weeks
- Stress, Moderate aerobic physical activity performed 3 times a week for 20 minutes or more, for 12 weeks or longer.

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- Self-esteem: Aerobic physical activity appears to have a higher effect on self-esteem
- Depression resistance and mixed physical activity reduced depressive symptoms more than aerobic physical activity alone
- Mood: single bout of low, moderate, or high intensity aerobic physical activity (for 25 – 60 minutes) can increase positive mood and decrease negative mood. Thus, making physical activity a habit would therefore positively influence mood state

What is the holistic approach?



- Physical Activity and Mental Health: *the role of physical activity in promoting mental wellbeing and preventing mental health problems*



Strategies towards Promotion Holistic Health



- Mental health is an essential part of overall health, and should be a vital and more recognized part of rationale for promoting active lifestyles among all age groups. Consideration should be made on:
 1. Educational materials and promotional messages
 2. Curriculum materials for a wide range of professionals and practitioners should outline the mental health benefits of physical activity.
 3. discuss and share information with clients/patients about the benefits of physical activity in relation to stress management and mental health.
 4. Supportive environments (physical and social)

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5. Policies embracing a holistic approach to mental and physical health promotion should be considered and implemented in multiple settings such as workplaces, communities and organizations.
- The overall evidence is clear that when people are physically active, it can boost mental health.
- A healthier future for all people includes a holistic focus on physical and mental health.

Key Areas for Consideration



- *The Built Environment and Health*
- *Professional Development*
- *Prevention and Intervention*

Conclusion



The benefits to engage in physical activity are wide-ranging and encompassing social, environmental, economic as well as for both physical and mental health.

Physical activity is not just about ‘health’ nor is it just about ‘sport and recreation’.

It has a triple bottom line impact, with overall benefits for the community.

Prioritising physical activity has multiple benefits for government, **reduced crime and vandalism costs, increased community connections, safer places, local business, employment, cohesion and wellbeing.**

As such, physical inactivity should be discouraged by encouraging environment that accommodate physical activity for positive mental health in a holistic approach providing the necessary facilities in the society for utilization.

Recommendations



- Physical activity is proven to be an effective, low-cost and safe way to manage mental health. Hence,
 1. Government sectors should work together to support a diverse range of organised recreational activities in the community
 2. The needs for support to implement best practice health and wellbeing programmes in the workplace.
 3. Encourages people to be more active through walking for transport, health, recreation and the environment through increasing physical activity by promoting cycling for transport and recreation.
 4. Educational materials and promotional messages by health and fitness practitioners, health promotion organizations

APPRECIATION



THANK YOU FOR LISTENING