



Role of Sports in Mental Health

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Abstract

Scientists have investigated numerous aspects of physical exercise and sports and their influence on the health of a person. However, the influence of physical activity and sport on mental health has not been looked at extensively. This research evaluates the evidence on the influence of physical workouts and other athletic activities on mental health. The results demonstrate the presence of a beneficial relationship between engagement in physical activities and the mental health of an individual.

Keywords: Sports, Mental, Health

Introduction

This article will discuss the relationship between doing sports and staying mentally well. More precisely, the book is an investigation into the ways in which a variety of different types of physical exercise and sport help to rehabilitation among those who have at some point in their lives been diagnosed with a mental illness. Because of this, the majority of our attention is concentrated on the lives of those who have had direct personal experience with mental health issues and who are also actively engaged in some form of sport or physical exercise. The first of our overarching goals for the book is to offer some fresh insight on the processes through which physical exercise and sport may contribute to rehabilitation. This is the first of our two primary goals for the book. The answer to the question, "What impact does sports and physical exercise have on mental illness?" is not really the focus of our investigation here. relating more to the process of investigating the topic. In the context of your life, what does participation in sports and other forms of physical exercise mean to you? In order to find an answer to this question, it is necessary to take the stories that people tell about their experiences seriously. These stories reveal how people make sense of their lives (in relation to the past, the present, and the future), as well as the place that they give to physical activity and sport throughout their lives. It is imperative that persons with mental health issues have this level of awareness if they are to participate in sports and other forms of physical exercise that are beneficial, welcoming, and powerful. Our second objective is to get some understanding of the types of possibilities for physical exercise and sport that are most likely to be perceived as 'helpful' by those who struggle with mental health issues. Our goal in this area is to shed light on the various ways in which chances for physical exercise and sports may be successfully begun, given, and supported in settings pertaining to mental health. This is a more applied aspect of our interest in this topic. Throughout the entirety of this book, we have made an effort to present information and material that will encourage informed consideration on the part of individuals who are engaged in or interested in the provision of physical exercise and sports. In this way, the book provides a repository of materials, provocations, and insights that, whether you

are a practitioner, a student, or a researcher, we hope will stimulate you to think on your own ideas and methods within the context of your own interests.

Background

In the most recent few years, there has been a significant rise in the number of people who are experiencing mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, stress, and thoughts of ending their own lives. According to findings published by a variety of health agencies, including the CDC (2020), more than 5 percent of individuals are affected by one form or another of a mental health issue on an annual basis. This suggests that approximately 43.8 million people throughout the world have a mental health issue within the course of a single year. While some people have only a single mental illness to contend with, others have a number of disorders that have a negative impact on their overall health (Pascoe & Parker, 2019). Children are also at an increased risk for developing mental health concerns. According to the available data, a variety of mental problems are diagnosed in more than ten percent of children and adolescents aged five to sixteen years old each year (Harris, 2018). Many problems that affect mental health manifest themselves at a young age and may continue throughout maturity. According to the findings of the National Alliance on Mental Health (2020), more than half of all persons who suffer from mental health illnesses claim that they first experienced symptoms of their disease during their adolescent years. As a result of the overwhelming intensity of the symptoms, some individuals ultimately decide to withdraw from school. Disorders of mental health are another factor that plays a role in the passing of many people (Harris, 2018). The vast majority of these deaths may be attributed to suicide ideation. Despite the fact that typical therapeutic methods for mental illnesses are successful, they do not always generate the comprehensive effects that are wanted for all patients. This is a very regrettable situation. If a person is given drugs that are not appropriate for their age or condition, there is a possibility that they could develop difficulties (Harris, 2018). According to a number of studies, engaging in physical activity has the potential to have an effect on an individual's mental health (Jetzke & Mutz, 2019). Therefore, those who are at risk of developing mental health illnesses can benefit from having sports and other physically active pursuits incorporated into their treatment plans.

Mental health in sport

The Faculty are committed to promoting the suggestions provided by "The Duty of Care Review," which include providing support personnel and coaches with training in mental health. NGBs should make it a priority to develop their connections with mental health teams in the NHS, charitable organisations, and support groups. This was further supported by the Faculty's endorsement of the policy document titled "Mental Health and Elite Sport Action Plan," which was published by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport. The plan for better mental health assistance for professional and elite athletes is outlined in the policy.

The Faculty urges organisations to sign up to the "Mental Health Charter for Sport and Recreation" in order to assist in the embedding of mental health within both their own institutions and more generally within the sport and recreation industry.

It is essential to take into consideration the possibility that those who play sports professionally, as opposed to people who play sports for fun, are more likely to experience mental health issues. In these circumstances, participation in athletics may be detrimental to the mental health of the athlete rather than beneficial. Athletes

may be more prone to certain manifestations, such as food problems alcohol usage and suicide. There are certain subgroups within professional sports that have a higher prevalence of mental illness. These subgroups include retired elite athletes (those who have experienced performance failure and those who have endured injury and other major negative life events (which are more likely to occur to athletes as young adults).

Most athletes will not seek help when they are experiencing issues with their mental health. It has been discovered that this is due to the following factors: stigma, a lack of awareness of mental health and its effect on performance, and the idea that getting treatment is a show of weakness. This can introduce additional dangers and calls for a different strategy that takes into account the cultural variables that are specific to elite athletics.

In the prevention and treatment of disease, as well as many other common disorders, including mental health, there is convincing evidence supporting the therapeutic use of physical activity and exercise medicine. This statement may be utilised in conjunction with any of our other evidence-based resources, such as Moving Medicine, which, upon its release in September 2018, will have an educational resource pertaining to the relationship between exercise and depression.

Methodology

The research articles that were utilised in the analysis of the body of previous work were collected from online databases. The decision was made to conduct the search electronically since doing so helps to save time and also makes it possible for the researcher to create a big number of articles with very little effort. Google Scholar, Cochrane, and PubMed are among the databases that were consulted for this study. These databases were chosen because of the trustworthiness they offer as sources of research papers that have been peer-reviewed and are related to a variety of health concerns. In addition to that, these databases include the most recent research publications that are pertinent to the health issue that is being discussed.

Search Terms

We used very specific search phrases in order to come up with credible literature that could contribute to the formation of an answer that is appropriate to the research issue. The phrases "physical exercise" and "sporting activities" were also utilised in the search, in addition to "the influence on mental health." The fact that these phrases met the primary aspects of the inquiry that was being asked for the study led to their selection as potential answers. Over 35,000 articles with information relevant to the search criteria were generated as a result of the search.

Review of Literature

The primary argument made regarding the effect that sports and other forms of physical activity have on mental health is that including these types of activities as part of a treatment and prevention strategy for psychological disorders can, over time, produce superior outcomes to those achieved through the use of pharmaceuticals (Pascoe & Parker, 2019). It is generally accepted that engaging in physical activities has a significant and beneficial effect on conditions such as stress, depression, anxiety, ADHD, and other psychological problems.

People who exercise regularly see improvements not just in their physical health but also in their mood, ability to sleep, and overall psychological well-being as a result of their regular participation in physical activity. This demonstrates that engaging in physical activities has the ability to improve both an individual's physical and mental health, which is not debatable in any way. Evidence to back up these statements may be found in a variety of various sources of published literature. Al-Qahtani, Shaikh, and Shaikh (2018), for example, observed that depressive symptoms, which have become a burden on the health system, can be alleviated via the participation in physical activity and athletic activities. According to Al-Qahtani et al. (2018), the treatment for mental problems involves a mix of receiving psychotherapy and taking medication. However, the benefits that are expected to come from these interventions are not always achieved. As a result of the limits of pharmacotherapy, it has become necessary to look for remedies that are more effective while also posing a lower risk. Exercise has been recognised as a viable alternative treatment option for a variety of mental health conditions as a result of extensive research. While only 65% of young people have access to psychotherapy and other forms of mental healthcare, Liddle, Deane, and Vella (2017) found that over 70% of this demographic had access to various forms of physical and sports activity. Therefore, those who are struggling should be encouraged to take part in even the most basic forms of physical activity in order to enhance their mental health. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) observed that persons who suffer from chronic mental disorders have a greater requirement than healthy people do to engage in physical activities on a regular basis in order to be able to deal with the anxiety that is linked with their health. The table that follows contains a graphic that compares the rates of physical inactivity among people who have chronic behavioural and mental illnesses to those who do not have such conditions. According to the data presented in this graphic, people with long-term mental illnesses have a significantly higher rate of inactivity than healthy people do.

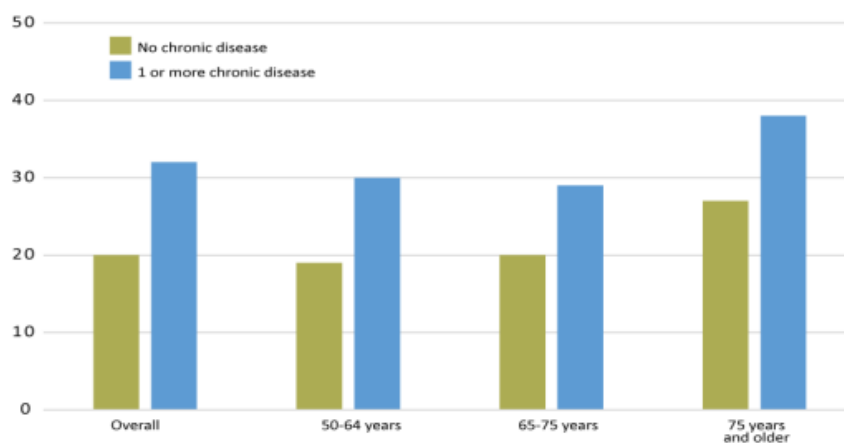


Figure 1. Percentage of physical inactivity among adults (CDC, 2020)

According to the findings of a study that was conducted by Woods, Breslin, and Hassan (2017) on the effect of sports on the mental health and wellbeing of inmates, participating in physically taxing activities was able to help a large number of people cope more effectively with psychologically taxing circumstances. It has been demonstrated that engaging in sporting activities leads to an increase in social relations amongst inmates, which in turn enables them to momentarily forget about the challenges they face behind bars. Not only are physical activities fun, but they also have a tendency to boost a person's self-confidence, which in turn makes it much simpler to reclaim one's sense of internal self-control (Woods et al., 2017). The desire of an individual to work

out is an innate drive that stimulates interaction with other people who have the same interests. In turn, this encourages the formation of social settings that are beneficial to a person's physical, mental, and emotional well-being as well as their sense of accomplishment. On the other hand, Wood et al. (2007) carried out research with the purpose of determining the influence that recreational facilities and green spaces have on the mental health of persons. According to the findings of this study, those who lived in areas having access to recreational facilities that supported sports activities had better mental health than those who lived in communities where similar facilities were absent. According to the findings of this research, the availability of enough public green spaces that are within walking distance of people has an important effect in enhancing the mental health of the general population.

According to Jetzke and Mutz (2019), the objectives and motives linked with athletic and physical activities affect the beneficial impact that these activities have on a person's subjective wellbeing brought on by participating in these activities. The intrinsic motivating aspects that are present in sporting activities, such as enjoyment, relaxation, and socialisation, all contribute to an individual's improved mental health in a good way. People typically participate in physical activities in order to accomplish particular objectives, such as achieving a desired weight, competing in a sport, or just spending time with friends and family. Therefore, engaging in sporting activities may provide an individual with a sense of accomplishment and contentment (Jetzke & Mutz, 2019).

Jetzke and Mutz (2019) discovered that those who engaged in physical activities had a better degree of pleasure with life compared to those who had a sedentary lifestyle. This was the result of their investigation. According to Lubans et al. (2016), the additional psychological elements that are boosted by physical exercise include resilience, cognitive function, quality of life, self-connectedness, and improved sleep. These benefits are noted in the chart below.

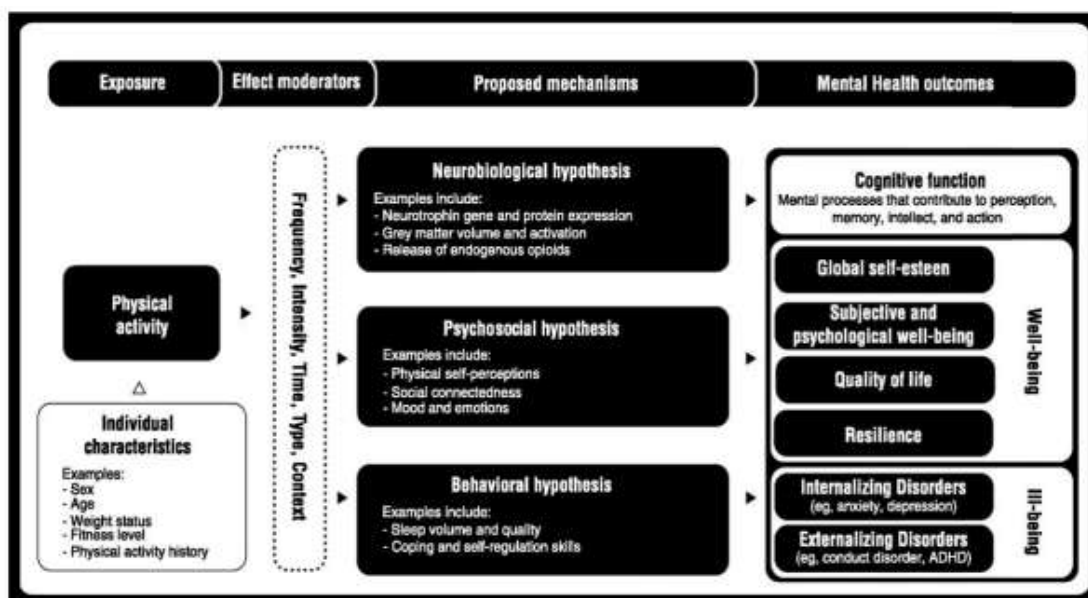


Figure 2. Effects of physical activity on mental health

According to a number of studies, the addition of regular physical activity to a therapy plan can be just as effective in addressing issues of mental health as the use of pharmaceuticals. It is important to note that engaging in physical activities does not put persons at increased risk for experiencing adverse consequences. According to the findings of Clough et al. (2016), participating in physical activities for fifteen minutes each day reduces by twenty-six percent the chance of developing anxiety and depression. Keeping up with a regular workout routine is another way to cut down on the danger of falling back into old habits. Because it triggers a number of beneficial changes in the brain, regular exercise is a tried-and-true treatment option for a variety of psychiatric conditions (Clough et al., 2016). Because it causes endorphins to be released into the body, it makes one feel more relaxed and generally better. These activities not only provide a diversion from depressing and anxious thoughts, but also from other behaviours that contribute to such feelings. In keeping with the practise of using physical activities in the treatment of depression and other mental disorders, Malm, Jakobsson, and Isaksson (2019) pointed out that the utilisation of these activities as primary and secondary interventions have a significant impact on the prevention and alleviation of depressive symptoms. This is in line with the practise of using physical activities in the treatment of depression and other mental disorders. The findings of Malm et al. (2019) provided support for the claims made by Clough et al. (2016), which said that engaging in physical activities can have an antidepressant impact in those who present with neurological symptoms. Importantly, training and exercise improve a person's social skills as well as their self-esteem, which in turn leads to an improvement in both their quality of life and their ability to cope with the symptoms of depression. According to the findings of a study conducted by Harris (2018), those who engage in regular physical exercise report a greater level of mental wellness. This is seen in the chart that can be found below.

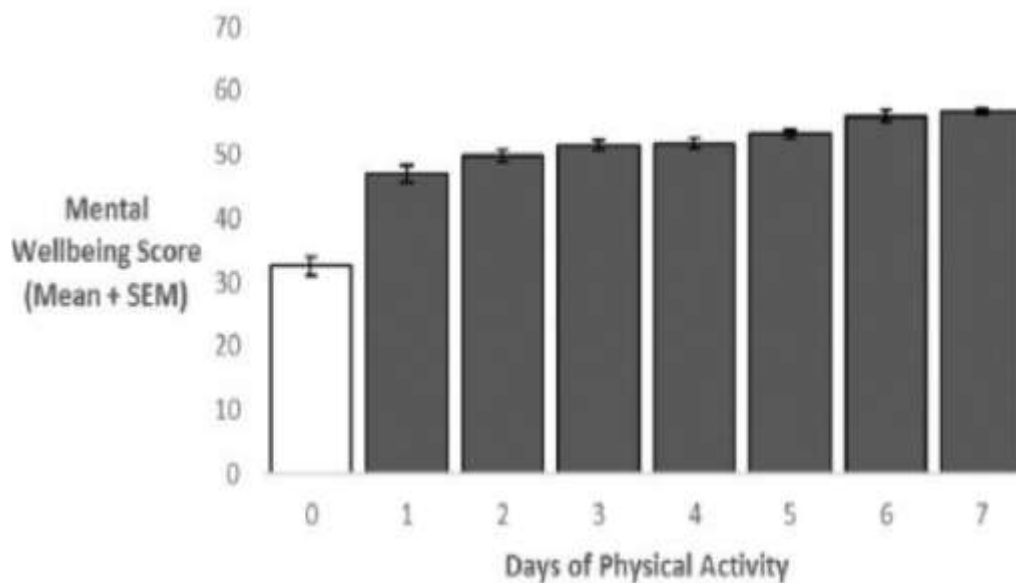


Figure 3. Mental health score (Harris, 2018)

Recommendations

The advice that exercise and other forms of physical activity should be considered as helpful therapies for mental health issues was brought about as a direct result of the findings of the current research. Research

findings from a variety of studies have consistently pointed to the positive effects that can come from engaging in physical activity. A better quality of life, relief from mental symptoms, and a lower risk of relapse are all indications that this treatment is beneficial. Therefore, in order to find a solution to their issues, individuals who are suffering from mental health conditions such as anxiety, depression, insomnia, exhaustion, and hopelessness ought to enrol in programmes that involve physical activity (Lubans et al., 2016).

Target Audience

People of all ages who are at high risk of developing mental health issues are considered to be the study's target population. This includes both children and adults. These individuals may utilise this evidence to make changes in their lifestyles, which will ultimately put their mental health on the road to recovery and lead to improvements in their overall health. Individuals who have been diagnosed with mental health conditions, as well as those who suffer from mild forms of these disorders, can improve their mental health and prevent incidences of mental disorders by incorporating physical and sporting activities into their daily lives. This is true for both individuals who have been diagnosed with mental health conditions and individuals who suffer from mild forms of these disorders. Practitioners of mental health treatment can also benefit from using this knowledge. This research may be used by these professionals as a guide to assist in the incorporation of physical activities into treatment regimens for clients who suffer from mental health illnesses.

Further Research

However, further study is required to identify whether or whether the effects of different types of physical activity on the reduction and alleviation of mental symptoms are comparable. Participation in a variety of aerobic activities, including walking, running, swimming, and cycling, is strongly recommended for those who are at increased risk of developing mental health conditions. On the other hand, it is unclear whether or not all of these activities would provide the same impact in terms of the avoidance of depressive symptoms and other mental illnesses. In addition, research has to be carried out to determine whether or not all psychological problems may be treated with the use of programmes including physical activity.

Conclusion

The increase in the number of people suffering from mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, stress, and suicidal thoughts over the past few years, despite the application of standard methods of care, has necessitated the implementation of physical exercise programmes which offer a more effective but less risky intervention. These programmes have been necessitated as a result of the increase in the number of people suffering from these issues over the last few years. Standard therapy procedures are successful for treating mental illnesses; however, these therapies may not always achieve the comprehensive benefits that are intended for all individuals. There is mounting evidence that participating in physically active pursuits can have a significant ameliorating effect on a variety of psychological conditions, including stress, sadness, anxiety, ADHD, and others. People who exercise regularly see improvements not just in their physical health but also in other aspects of their well-being, such as their memory, mood, quality of sleep, and overall psychological health. People are able to ignore their worries more easily as a result of the increased social connections that occur as a result of sporting events. These activities are not only fun, but they also help a person become more self-assured, which makes it much simpler to restore the ability to exercise internal self-control. Endorphins are

released when people participate in physical activities, which contributes to a sense of relaxation and overall wellness and helps achieve the goals of the activities. A person's quality of life can noticeably improve as a result of participating in these activities because they serve as a distraction from the negative thoughts and other behaviours that contribute to feelings of sadness and anxiety.

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