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Perceived knowledge of the benefits of exercise/sports and extent of participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults in Ebonyi State

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Abstract

This study investigated the perceived knowledge of the benefits and extent of exercise and sports participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults in Ebonyi state. This was cross-sectional quantitative survey research design conducted among 252 adolescents/adults in Ebonyi state. A semi structured questionnaire using purposive/continence sampling was the instrument and sampling method used for data collection. The analysis of data was done using using mean (x) and standard deviation to answer the research questions, and t-test statistics to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The results shows that the respondents possess high knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State, with the overall mean score ($\bar{x}$ =3.4). There was also high extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults. with the overall mean score ($\bar{x}$= 3.5). Based on the findings, the study recommended that: Government should develop comprehensive public health campaigns that highlight the benefits of regular exercise and these campaigns to sustain and maintain the high knowledge of exercise and sports participation in Ebonyi state. Moreover, government at all levels should prioritize sport education that not only teaches skills but also promotes lifelong fitness habits and healthy lifestyle choices and provide training for physical education teachers to enhance their ability to teach the value of sports and fitness effectively in schools.

Keywords: Exercise; Sport; Participation; Health Promotion; Adolescents/Adults; Ebonyi State

1. Introduction

Regular exercise and sports participation are essential for health promotion, and reducing the risk of chronic diseases, improving mental well-being, and enhancing overall quality of life [1]. Regarding adults, exercise and sport participation enhances prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes and reduces symptoms of depression and anxiety, enhances brain health, and can improve overall well-being [1,2].

Exercise, Sports, and health are closely related and work together at achieving wellness, happier, healthier and more productive lives of an individual [3]. Conceptually, Exercise can be viewed as a planned, structured, and repetitive physical activity aimed at improving or maintaining physical fitness and wellness of a person, while sports are a subset

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of exercise that involve competition, rules, and often, skill development. Exercise is primarily focused on improving or maintaining physical fitness, such as strength, endurance, flexibility and wellness [4].

Research has shown that engaging in sports and physical activity during adolescence improves overall health, reduced mental health problems, and a higher likelihood of maintaining an active lifestyle in adulthood [2].

Regular Exercise and sports participation has been documented as difficult to achieve, maintain and promote which invariably predispose individual to chronic illnesses and sudden deaths associated with sedentary life styles[5]. Current global survey has estimated that 1 in 3 adults and 81% of adolescents do not engage enough in regular exercise and physical activity[6]. Furthermore, as countries develop economically, levels of inactivity increase and can be as high as 70% due to changing transport patterns, increased use of technology for work and recreation, cultural values and increasing sedentary behaviour[6]. It is noteworthy that the benefits and importance of adequate engagement in health promotional activities like exercise and sports cannot be overemphasized hence it helps at achieving and maintaining optimal health and striking a balance between the dimensions of health and work[1,6].

Health promotion is the process of empowering individuals and communities to take control of factors that affect their health, with the aim of improving their overall well-being [7]. Further, it aims at promoting and improving the health of an individual to reach a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being of individuals [7]. Health promotion encompasses a variety of strategies aimed at enhancing the well-being of individuals and communities [8]. Health promotion, as an outcome of sport, is based on the concept that organized sports are promoting health because they offer physical activity practice opportunities, contributing to healthy lifestyles, but also showing evidence of benefits for physical, social, mental, and community health[9-11]. In health promotion through sport and exercise, it is emphasized that sport and exercise is used as a means, a tool or a vehicle for better health outcomes and wellness[12-14].

Nevertheless, despite the positive impact of exercise and sport on health promotion, many individuals, especially in rural areas of Ebonyi state may not be aware thus may not be participating on exercise and sport for health promotion. Moreover, many schools and communities lack access to adequate sports facilities and equipment, making it difficult to participate in exercise and sport education programs. Research have reported the pressing need for scientific investigation on the effectiveness of sport and exercise participation on health promotion [8,12,14-17]. These scenarios have prompted the researchers to investigate the extent of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi state. This study is necessary thus, lack of sports participation can lead to a range of problems, including increased health risks, poor mental well-being, and hindered personal development, as well as potentially impacting community cohesion and economic opportunities. The objective of the present study was to determine the perceived knowledge of the benefits and extent of exercise and sports participation for health promotion among adolescents/adult in Ebonyi state. Specifically, the study identified: a) the perceived Knowledge of the benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi state; b) the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/youths of Ebonyi State.

2. Methodology

A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. Descriptive survey design according to Abonyi [18], consist of studies in which data are collected from a small sample of a large population to enable the researcher describe in a systematic manner and interpret the characteristic features and facts about things that exist. A survey is a descriptive study when it seeks to document and describe what exists or the present status of existence or absence of what is being investigated. The study was carried out in Ebonyi State. The population of the study comprised all the 252 adolescents/adult of Ebonyi State. The entire population was used as the sample size of the study. The instrument for data collection was a semi- structured questionnaire. The instrument was pretested with 30 respondents from another state not included in the population/sample of the study. The data collected was subjected to the test of internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha procedure with reliability coefficient of 0.82. The reliability index guaranteed the instrument to be used for the general study. The data collected for this study was analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the null hypothesis was tested using the t- test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings were presented using tables.

3. Results

3.1. Research Question One: What is the Perceived Knowledge of the benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi state

Table 1 Mean and standard deviation on the Perceived Knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State

S/N	Perceived Knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion	N	X̄	SD	Dec.
1	Exercise and sport participation enhances prevention and management of noncommunicable diseases	216	3.42	0.52	HK
2	Exercise and sport can prevent depression and anxiety	216	3.41	0.56	HK
3	Exercise and sport improve mental health outcomes and well-being	216	3.33	0.49	HK
4	Exercise and sport enhance quality of life	216	3.43	0.53	HK
5	Exercise and sport help in weight management	216	3.43	0.58	HK
6	Exercise and sport improve or maintain physical fitness	216	3.47	0.53	HK
7	Exercise and sport boosts immune system function	216	3.53	0.48	HK
8	Any other benefit		0	0	NA
	Grand Mean		3.4		HE

Decision Key: 2.5 and above = High Knowledge (HK). 2. 4 and below = Low Knowledge (LK).

The Data in the Table 1 represented the perceived knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State. Specifically, the findings show that the participants possess high knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State with the overall mean score of $\bar{x}$= 3.4. However, no other benefit was indicated by the participants as indicated in the table 1 above.

3.2. Research Question Two: What is the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults of Ebonyi State

Table 2 Mean and standard deviation on the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/youths of Ebonyi State

S/N	Extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion	N	X	SD	Dec
9	To what extent do you participate in planned/structured activity aimed at improving or maintaining physical fitness	216	3.80	0.40	HE
10	To what extent do you participate in competitive activity with rules and often a focus on skill development	216	3.00	0.49	HE
11	To what extent do you participate in specific exercises designed to target particular fitness goals	216	3.41	0.46	HE
12	To what extent do you participate in Competition at winning	216	3.36	0.53	HE
13	To what extent do you participate in Jogging, swimming, cycling, aerobics, yoga	216	3.47	0.53	HE
14	To what extent do you participate in Soccer, basketball, tennis, football, rugby, swimming, and gymnastics	216	3.67	0.47	HE
	Grand Mean	216	3.50		

Decision Key: 2.5 and above = High Extent. 2. 4 and below = LE: Low extent.

The Data in the Table 2 represented Mean and standard deviation on the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults of Ebonyi State. Specifically, the findings show high extent ($\bar{x}$= 3.5), of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults.

- **Ho_1**: There was no significant difference between the mean ratings of male and female on the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State.

Table 3 T-test on the difference in the mean ratings of male and female on the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State

Items	Status	N	Mean	SD	t.cal.	Df	P-value	Decision
1	Male Female	100 116	3.58 3.57	0.53 0.52	0.12	114	0.98	NS
2	Male Female	100 116	3.51 3.50	0.55 0.56	0.11	114	0.70	NS
3	Male Female	100 116	3.71 3.68	0.48 0.50	0.33	114	0.43	NS
4	Male Female	100 116	3.44 3.43	0.52 0.53	0.31	114	0.68	NS
5	Male Female	100 116	3.44 3.43	0.58 0.59	0.21	114	0.81	NS
6	Male Female	100 116	3.48 3.46	0.52 0.53	0.27	114	0.55	NS
7	Male Female	100 116	3.63 3.63	0.48 0.48	0.10	114	1.00	NS

Key: NS: Not significant

Result on Table 3 revealed that the mean ratings of male and female on the extent of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State was not significant as the P value of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$) was less than the calculated values. This means that the respondents were of same opinion on the extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State.

4. Discussion

Result of the study as presented in Table 1 showed that the respondents possess high knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State. This finding is not expected thus, amazing. This is because of the sedentary life associated with hardship, unemployment and lack of exercise and sport equipment and facility. The finding was also not expected with the low and lack of interest in sport observed among adolescent's/youth due to lack of knowledge on the benefits of exercise and sports participation[19]. The finding many not be out of place hence supported by studies in Nigeria, including those in the southeastern region, indicating that many people are aware of the health benefits of physical activity, including disease prevention and improved well-being[20]. The finding was in line with the research which also reported that People understand that exercise can help prevent obesity, diabetes, and hypertension, as well as improving cardiovascular health and overall fitness [21]. This finding is also in consonance with the study by Wong et al.[22], which reported that the majority of people in Hong Kong have good knowledge of exercise and sport. The current finding is somewhat high that the study in Hong Kong which may be due to high level of information dissemination and awareness campaigns on the benefits of physical exercise on televisions, social media tools. The finding is a rebuttal to the study which revealed poor knowledge of people on physical activity and exercise regimens[23,24].

The result on table 2 show high extent of extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults. The findings of the current study are not expected and consequently a surprise. Although, the outcome of the study is not out of place hence alluded to the similar study which revealed that the majority of people in Enugu have a positive attitude towards physical exercise. This positive attitude of people to physical exercise could be

influenced by the rising practice of road walking in many corners of the Enugu metropolis and many physical environmental features that are promotive to early morning or evening walkouts [21]. The current finding also alluded to study which revealed that. The high extent of participation of exercise and sport was due to the fact that exercise is prescribed as a means to stay healthy, prolong life and as part of the treatment regimen for some persons that may have some chronic non-communicable conditions like diabetes mellitus, obesity and cardiovascular problems[21,25]. The findings However, is a rebuttal to the study who reported that respondents have a low extent of exercise and sport participation [26]. The high or low extent of physical exercise and sport participation may be attributed to the participant understanding of the benefits of regular physical exercise and sport participation[20].

5. Conclusions

The present findings concluded that respondents possess high knowledge of benefit of exercise and sports participation for health promotion in Ebonyi State. Consequently, the study revealed high extent of exercise and sport participation for health promotion among adolescents/adults. The findings underscore the need to intensify and consolidate educative efforts, especially in the area of negative effects of sedentary life style and physical inactivity among people of Ebonyi state and make provisions for places, facilities and equipment for exercise training among adolescents/youths. Following further from the findings of the study, it is suggested that further studies be conducted to verify other factors that may be affecting the practice of physical exercise and sports for health promotion among adolescents/adult in ebonyi state. More so, Government should develop comprehensive public health campaigns that highlight more benefits of regular exercise and these campaigns should be targeted towards diverse socio- demography of the participants. Again, school management should be re-visit school curricula to prioritize sport education that not only teaches skills but also promotes lifelong fitness habits, healthy lifestyle choices and training for physical education teachers to enhance their ability to teach the value of sports.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

The authors declare that there are no competing or potential conflicts of interest.

Statement of informed consent

Before the commencement of the study, a written informed consent was obtained from all the participants.

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