

UNDERSTANDING AND PERCEPTION ABOUT THE ROLE OF FITNESS RESULTING PHYSICAL EXERCISE

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ABSTRACT

The research paper is based upon a designed to understand perceptions about the role of fitness resulting physical exercise. A survey was re-narrated to administer interview schedule from two hundred randomly selected respondents in Dera Ismail Khan District of Pakistan's NWFP Province during the year 2006. The results showed that majority of the respondents were aware that physical fitness can improve health (shedding extra weight and lower blood pressure and risk of health diseases), improve working efficiency (withstand fatigue and increase work capacity) and improve overall wellness (smart look and well being) of individual.

KEYWORDS: Physical exercise, perceptions, fitness, doctors, lawyers, teachers, businessmen

INTRODUCTION

Maintaining sound health and following proper fitness programme are important challenges that this modern era is facing. The existence of fast culture and necessity to work longer hours to maintain a good and scarcity of time to manage fitness are common in a country like Pakistan. This has resulted in the prevalence of various diseases and health related problems. A lot of attention has been placed to design health interventions, education and other preventive measures to reduce risks of heart disease among Asians having higher mortality and morbidity which may be attributed to differences in public health awareness and life style (Lip et al., 2006). Physical activity for sustain fitness can encompass various activities namely walking, swimming, weight loss measures and other health related activities.

The physical fitness is related to disease endurance, muscle strength, flexibility and balanced body composition (Thomas et al., 2000). Self monitoring strategies such as weighing oneself, planning meals, tracking fat and calories and exercise to daily routine may be important in successful weight loss (Kruger et al., 2006). Elley et al., (2006) reported that four 10- minute brisk snacks of brisk walking were as effective as 40 minutes of continuous brisk walking per day at reducing blood pressure. Regular physical activity is regarded as an important component of a healthy life style, decreasing, for example, the risk of cardiovascular diseases, non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus, hyper tension, colon cancer and

obesity (Pate et al., 1995). Making a commitment to follow an exercise schedule is an important ingredient for fitness plan (Thomas et al., 2000). Awareness of a physical activity is a complex health related behaviour in that it consists of a large number of activities that are spread over each day such as walking, cycling, swimming, running etc, the determination of one's own level of physical activity is difficult and therefore highlights the importance of a awareness of a physical activity an important determinant to perform that activity (Ronda et al., 2001).

Thus, various researchers have reported the importance of apportioning proper time and preference to follow different exercise related activities coupled with a balanced diet plan are vital in maintaining physical fitness, reduce the risks of health related problems and provide enjoyment. In order to understand physical fitness, present research is, therefore, formulated to understand differences in perceptions about fitness as a result of exercise of community comprising of doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen in Dera Ismail Khan District of Pakistan's NWFP.

METHODOLOGICAL SETTINGS

The interview questions were prepared with the help of literature and experts of relevant field. These questions of interview were given to the forty experts for their opinion and comments to check the content validity. It was improved in the light of their comments and observations. Data were collected from two hundred randomly selected respondents

in District Dera Ismail Khan of Pakistan's North West Frontier Province (NWFP) by using survey method. The respondents were categorized into four groups namely doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen. The selection of respondents was based on time, cost and accessibility issues. The research was conducted during March, 2006. For each group of respondents, a separate sampling frame was constructed by utilizing information from D.H.Q hospital for the selection of doctors, bar council list for lawyers; teachers were chosen from list supplied by the local education authority

while lists from elected union of businessmen in Dera Ismail Khan were helpful in selecting sample of businessmen. Systematic sampling procedure of probability sampling was used to select survey respondents. A five point Likert scale (Likert, 1931) was used to collect ordinal data ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The interview schedule was administered personally and received 100 % response. Primary data collected from interviews was subjected to statistical analysis by using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Scientists).

Table-I: Showing agreement/disagreement of respondents regarding perceptions about the role of physical fitness as a result of exercise.

Perceptions about the role of fitness	Agreement/ Disagreement of Respondents (%)				
	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Maintaining Health					
Reduce extra/overweight	43	52	3	2	0
Keep diseases away	41	49	4	6	0
Lower blood pressure and risk of heart diseases	22	57	10	10	1
Work Efficiency					
Withstand fatigue	33	48	9	10	0
Improve working capacity	9	86	2	2	1
Well being					
Smart look	38	52	1	6	3
Overall wellness	33	59	6	2	0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Exercise is vital in maintaining fitness.

Perceptions were determined in the following major areas

1. Maintenance of good health
2. Improvement in work related efficiency and
3. Overall well being

Respondents judged maintenance of good health as a result of fitness from exercise in terms of shedding extra weight, keeping away from diseases and control of heart problems and regulating blood pressure. The results are presented in Table-1. Majority of the respondents (95%) were in agreement that performance of physical exercise has direct

stake in reducing extra/ over weight. Similarly respondents (90%) were also in conformity that maintaining fitness can keep diseases away. The prevalence of blood pressure and commonality of heart diseases is increasing day by day due to environmental and personal hygiene and irregular eating habits in Pakistan. On the same bases respondents (79%) were fully agreed to the notion that exercise yield necessary fitness that can regulate blood pressure and reduce the risk of coronary diseases. These results are in conformity with Lip et al., (2006) that health perception and physical exercise has implications for heart disease prevention. Similar finding were quoted by Kruger et al.,

(2006) that physical activity behaviours among adults successful at weight loss maintenance. Furthermore, Elley et al., (2006) also reported similar results in evaluating that exercise can lower blood pressure.

Efficient performance of work related jobs is a specialised area and demand well fit person to accomplish jobs especially when it involves working for longer hours and involves mental exertions. Often break down and fatigue resulted as a result of over burden. When respondents were evaluated that how physical fitness was related to do tedious jobs and improves work efficiency, most of than (81%) were aware that fitness enhances the ability to stand against fatigue. Similarly (95%) respondents were in agreement that fitness improves working capacity. Also majority of the sampled population quoted that fitness may tune the body that helps in doing the tedious jobs without feeling extra burden. Similar results were reported by Corbin and Lindsey (1997) that good physical fitness can help an individual work effectively and efficiently.

Looking smart and over all well being are another important perceptions advocated by the survey respondents as a result of fitness resulting exercise. Almost all the respondents (90%) were fully aware of the smart look embedded in physical fitness and that fitness is the tool that gives smart look to the human personality. Similarly data on "fitness means over all well being" shows that majority of respondents (92%) were fully aware of the role fitness in overall well being of the individual. The overall well being was presented in terms of enjoying life activities, intellectual applications, socially more active as well as emotionally under control. These findings are in conformity with McGinnis and Lee (1995).

CONCLUSION

It has been observed that the community comprising of doctors, lawyers, teachers and businessmen in present study are fully agree that physical exercises and physical fitness are very beneficial for reducing extra/overweight, keep the diseases away, control the blood pressure and heart diseases, enhance the ability to stand against fatigue

and working capacity and do the tedious jobs very efficiently without feeling any burden. The researcher also conclude that physical fitness developing the human personality which is resulting looking very smart and fit as well as over all well being of the individuals.

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