

SPORTS PARTICIPATION AND WELL-BEING OF COMMUNITY HEALTH STUDENTS AT UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN TEACHING HOSPITAL, AMILEGBE, KWARA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated sports participation and well-being of community health students at University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Amilegbe, Kwara State. A descriptive survey research design was used. The population for the study comprised all students at School of Community Health, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital, Amilegbe, Kwara State. A validated structured questionnaire was used for data collection. The reliability co-efficient of 0.83 was obtained through spilt-half method using Spearman-Brown Rank Order formula. All the research questions were answered and presented using percentage. The study revealed that participation in weekly sporting activities promotes the physical well-being (749, 90%) and the social well-being (936, 90%) among community health students. It was recommended that, continuous mandatory sports participation on weekly basis among students should be encouraged, maintained and well monitored due to its therapeutic effects on their physical well-being. Also, students' sport representative committee with the support of institutional management should be organizing inter-college competition on yearly basis as this will further foster interpersonal communication, new association and prevents boredom among students.

Key words: Sport, Participation, Well-being, Community health students

Introduction

Sports, like medicine, makes an individual physically fit, mentally alert and socially well related and adjusted. The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health status is one of the fundamental rights of every human being irrespective of sex, race, ethnicity, religious affiliation, social affiliation, economic and educational status. Sports participation is one of the factors that play an important role in

the optimal physical, psychological and social well-being of an individual. Sporting activity is a key factor in promoting healthy lifestyles among students who engage in it; and through sports, students learn social and cognitive skills (Choi et. al., 2014).

Sport is defined as a subset of physical activity undertaken individually or as part of a team. Regardless of age, active sports participation works like medicine

(Malm et. al., 2019). Bolarinwa (2021) defined sports as organized spontaneous exercises or games or as a competitive or non-competitive process through which an individual obtains physical skills, mental relaxation and bodily fitness. According to Okechukwu (2021), sports in a social context can be defined as a type of leisure-time physical activity organized to improve physical, social, emotional and mental well-being among the participants. World Health Organization (WHO) (2022) defined physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Sports have the capacity to develop the physical, intellectual, social and moral dimensions of life for all the citizens; and it has, overtime, been a conduit for communication between nations and people (Momoh, 2017).

It is expected that all adults should participate in 150 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity or an equivalent combination of moderate and vigorous physical activity each week in order to promote optimal health and lower the risk of developing cardiovascular diseases (CVDs) or hardening of the arteries (Arnett et. al., 2019). About a quarter of the global adult population do not currently meet the WHO recommendations of staying active (WHO, 2013). People who do not meet recommendations for physical activity are considered physically inactive and are sometimes called sedentary (Malm et. al. 2019). WHO (2013) estimated that annual global deaths from physical inactivity are currently above three million.

Students schooling at the School of Community Health, University of Ilorin Teaching Hospital (UTH), Amilegbe, Kwara State do participate in sporting activities and games on weekly basis, that is, once-a-week, every Wednesday for a maximum period of 90 minutes. It is expected of all students to participate actively. Available sports and games for community health students include: football, volleyball, table tennis, weightlifting, running, jogging, skipping rope, board game (ludo), card game (whots) and local game-“ayo olopon”. Sports have positive impacts on students’ well-being. Well-being of every student cannot be overlooked for optimal performance in academic activities with significant mental output. According to United Nations (2021), the promotion of national well-being is acknowledged as a priority internationally. Therefore, it is expected of every student to be physically, mentally and socially sound in order to cope in higher institutions and obtain high academic grades as an output.

According to Capio et. al. (2014), physical well-being is the ability to perform physical activities and carry out social roles that are not hindered by physical limitations and experiences of bodily pain, and biological health indicators. LovingLife (2021) conceptualized physical well-being as the physical state of body, maintenance of a healthy weight, good posture, well functioning organs, or the ability to carry out normal daily tasks without exhaustion or discomfort. Sports participation has potential to promote positive physical well-being. It is proven that having positive physical well-being can reduce chances of diseases. According to

LovingLife (2021), those that exercise regularly can reduce their chances of early death by 30%. Exercise has been shown to have many physical benefits which include: improved muscular and cardio respiratory fitness (Telford et. al., 2016), bone health and function; and maintaining a healthy body weight (Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee, 2018).

One of the major positive influences of sports on physical well-being of an individual is physical fitness which helps to perform everyday activities with good stamina, without becoming overtly tired and with energy to enjoy leisure activities, maintaining flexibility, balance, speed of movement, cardio respiratory fitness and musculoskeletal fitness (United States of Health and Human Services, 2018). Physically active children and young people have stronger bones, lower body fat, lower risk of CVDs, higher level of cardio respiratory fitness; and higher muscular endurance and strength in comparison with inactive young people (Tahira, 2021),

Obesity and overweight account for 5% of all deaths worldwide, but sports participation is associated with lower body fat, mass index, and lower risk of obesity (Agata & Monyeki, 2018). According to WHO (2022b), regular physical activity helps prevent and treat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancers. It also helps to prevent hypertension, overweight and obesity; and can improve mental health and quality of life. As stated by European Curriculum (2014), benefits of sports participation include improvement of fitness level, relaxation, weight management,

physical appearance and general monitoring of well-being of participants.

According to [Sinclair \(2021\)](#), [well-being encompasses many elements](#) and these include positive emotions, such as happiness, joy, contentment, excitement and calmness. It also includes good physical health, meaningful social relationships and connections. Social well-being can be defined as the sharing, developing and sustaining of meaningful relationships with others. Social well-being of medical and paramedical students is very important as it affects their interpersonal relationships with clients or patients, professional colleagues and others. No human being is expected to live in isolation except there is a problem.

Due to the relevance of sports in a social framework, Okechukwu (2021) submitted that participating in sporting activity is associated with emotional benefits such as improvements in well-being. Among the social health benefits of sports participation include, improved social interaction and self-esteem, better prosocial behaviour and less internalizing problems (Moeijes et. al., 2018). Ademola (2015) established that sports give people enjoyment, happiness, brings about friendship, satisfaction, popularity, recognition, feeling of victory and success. Sports can promote social interaction, cooperation, friendship and foster desirable social behaviour like loyalty, honesty, fair play, trust, self-discipline, respect for others and constituted authority (Oyedele et. al., 2020). Whitehouse (2022) further asserted that sports participation improve self-esteem, boosts self-confidence and self-belief.

One among the strong influence of sports participation on social well-being is the development of soft social skills. According to Maslen (2015), soft social skills are personal attributes that allow people to build positive social relationships. Team sports are excellent sources of soft social skills development as they allow athletes to grow within a supportive environment. Whitehouse (2022) established that sports participation improves soft social skills such as communication, organization and time management and leadership. Also, while participating in sports, discipline can be learnt including organization and effective time management in order to maximize the time frame for success (Whitehouse, 2022).

Statement of the Problem

Community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State do participate in a mandatory weekly sporting activities provided by the institution authority as one among the ways to enhance total well-being and cut down sedentary lifestyle which can prone students to risk of NCDs. According to WHO (2021), prevalence of insufficient physically active persons aged 18+ years is high in both low/middle-income countries in which Nigeria was among them. According to Westerbeek and Wine (2021), many nations have population that is largely inactive, and this places a great burden on both the health system and the economy. The decline in physical activity levels among young adults could be a potential risk factor for the onset of chronic diseases, mental health problems such as depression and anxiety (McMahon et. al., 2017). Ding et.al. (2016) opined that if physical inactivity is eliminated,

several preventable chronic diseases could be largely evaded including 7.9% of heart diseases, 9.8% of type 2 diabetes and more than 13% of breast cancer cases.

According to WHO (2021), insufficient physical activity is the 4th leading risk factor for mortality. Approximately 3.2 million deaths and 32.1 million Disability –Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) (representing about 2.1% of global DALYs) each year are attributable to insufficient physical activity. There is possibility of unknown inherent or unnoticed NCDs among the different categories of students based on the peculiarity of their ages in which the weekly participation in sporting activities can modify or slow down their progression. Perhaps the opportunity of weekly participation in sporting activities did not come while in school for community health students, many may be living physically inactive life possibly due to urbanization, automation, number of hours spent in the workplace, affluence, societal disposition, value system, cultural perception among others. Therefore, the researchers investigated the extent to which sports participation promotes the well-being of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State.

Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate sport participation and well-being of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State.

Research Questions

The following questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. Does participation in weekly sporting activities promote the

- physical well-being of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State?
- Does participation in weekly sporting activities promote the social well-being of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State?

Methodology

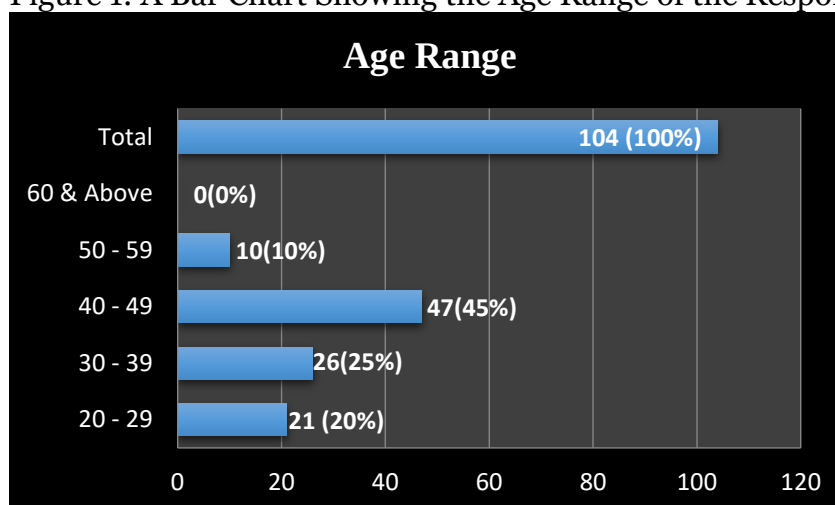
A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. It was institutional-based study. The population for the study comprised all registered students in the year 2023 at School of Community Health, UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State, totalling one hundred and four (104). A purposive sampling technique was used to select all the entire students making 104 students as the total sample size for the study. Researchers' designed structured questionnaire titled "Sports Participation and Wellbeing of Community Health Students (SPWCHS)" was used to obtain quantitative data from the

respondents. The instrument was validated by three experts that is, from the fields of Human Kinetics Education, Community Health and Medical Science. The reliability of the instrument was carried out using split half method and data obtained were correlated using Spearman-Brown Rank Order formula which yielded 0.83r. The permission to carry out the study was obtained from the authority of the institution concerned. The consent of each respondent was sought with the filling of consent form. Participation in the study was voluntary and confidentiality of information maintained. One trained research assistant helped in the instrument administration. Data entry, processing and analysis were done using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) version 23.0. The demographic data of the respondents was analyzed using bar chart; while the three research questions were answered and presented using percentage.

Results

Demographics: Age of the Respondents

Figure 1: A Bar Chart Showing the Age Range of the Respondents



The figure 1 above shows the age range of the respondents. Respondents with age range 40-49

years had the highest frequency and percentage (47, 45%) followed by age range 30-39 years (26, 25%), 20-29

years (21, 20%) and 50-59 years (10, 10%).

Research Question 1: Does participation in weekly sporting

activities promotes the physical wellbeing of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State?

Table 1: Participation in weekly sporting activities and promotion of physical well-being among community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State

S/N	Items	SA	A	PRs	U	SD	D	NRs
1	Cardio respiratory (heart and breathing) functioning is improved.	60 57.7%	38 36.5%	98 94.2%	3 2.9%	3 2.9%	0 0%	3 2.9%
2	There is increase in strength and agility against daily stress and pressures.	48 46.2%	45 43.3%	93 89.5%	7 6.7%	3 2.9%	1 1%	4 3.9%
3	Body shape is kept and thereby improves public image/outlook.	46 44.2%	43 41.3%	89 85.5%	5 4.8%	6 5.8%	4 3.8%	10 9.6%
4	Body joints and the muscular pains are relieved.	50 48.1%	41 39.4%	91 87.5%	8 7.7%	5 4.8%	0 0%	5 4.8%
5	Blood pressure is kept within the range.	42 40.4%	40 38.5%	82 78.9%	13 12.5%	5 4.8%	4 3.8%	9 8.6%
6	Healthy body weight (weight management) is maintained that is, reduces excess fat accumulation.	58 55.8%	35 33.7%	93 89.5%	7 6.7%	3 2.9%	1 1%	4 3.9%
7	There is improved sleep pattern and thereby keeps the body healthy.	55 52.9%	49 47.1%	104 100%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%
8	Body is kept alert for daily activities.	54 51.9%	45 43.3%	99 95.2%	2 1.9%	2 1.9%	1 1%	3 2.9%
Total		413	336	749	45	27	11	38

The table 1 revealed that (60, 57.7%), (48, 46.2%), (46, 44.2%), (50, 48.1%), (42, 40.4%), (58, 55.8%), (55, 52.9%) and (54, 51.9%) respondents responded that participation in weekly sporting activities promote their cardio respiratory functioning, strength and agility, body shape, body joints and muscular pains, blood pressure, body weight, sleep pattern and kept body alive for daily activities respectively.

Research Question 2: Does participation in weekly sporting activities promote the social wellbeing of community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State?

Table 2: Participation in weekly sporting activities and promotion of social wellbeing among community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State

S/N	Items	SA	A	PRs	U	SD	D	NRs
1.	Interpersonal interaction is improved as relationship with colleagues is enhanced.	63 60.6%	40 38.4%	103 99%	1 1%	0 0%	0 0%	0 0%

2.	Opportunity for new friends/associates among colleagues is achieved.	58 55.8%	37 35.6%	95 91.4%	4 3.8%	3 2.9%	2 1.9%	5 4.8%
3.	Team work spirit is inculcated which may later help health team work approach.	45 43.3%	52 50%	97 93.3%	3 2.9%	3 2.9%	1 1.0%	4 3.9%
4.	Loneliness is remarkably reduced through interaction while on field.	46 44.2%	54 51.9%	100 96.1%	3 2.9%	1 1%	0 0%	1 1.0%
5.	Oral (verbal) communication skills are improved.	40 38.5%	49 47.1%	89 85.6%	6 5.8%	6 5.8%	3 2.9%	9 8.7%
6.	Self-esteem is more developed.	45 43.3%	46 44.2%	91 87.5%	8 7.7%	5 4.8%	0 0%	5 4.8%
7.	Confidence in other colleagues is built through team sport	42 40.4%	56 53.8%	98 94.2%	3 2.9%	3 2.9%	0 0%	3 3.9%
8.	Organization skills are enhanced through team play.	44 42.3%	49 47.1%	93 89.4%	6 5.8%	4 3.8%	1 1.0%	5 4.8%
9.	Value of effective time management is inculcated.	37 35.6%	52 50%	89 85.6%	8 7.7%	5 4.8%	2 1.9%	7 6.7%
10.	There is discovery and realization of one's hidden potential(s).	33 31.7%	48 46.2%	81 77.9%	5 4.8%	9 8.7%	9 8.7%	18 17.4%
	Total	453	483	936	47	39	18	57

The table 2 showed that (63, 60.6%) and (58, 55.8%) respondents responded that participation in weekly sporting activities promote their interpersonal interaction and opportunity for new friends/associates respectively. Also, (52, 50%), (54, 51.9%), (49, 47.1%), (46, 44.2%), (56, 53.8%), (49, 47.1%), (52, 50%) and (48, 46.2%) agreed that sports participation further promote their team work, reduced loneliness, improved oral communication skills, developed self-esteem, built confidence in other colleagues, enhanced organization skills, inculcated value of effective time management; and discovery and realization of hidden potentials respectively.

Discussion

In the figure 1, most repondents were between the age range 40-49 years (47, 45%) followed by 30-39 years (26, 25%). Looking at the age categories of those students, they need sporting activities to cope with their studies while in school. Table 1 shows that the significant

number of respondents (749, 90%) opined that participation in weekly sporting activities greatly promote their physical well-being with respect to cardio respiratory functioning, strength and agility, body joints and muscular pains, blood pressure management, body weight maintenance, sleep pattern and keeping the body alive for daily activities. The results of these findings are in line with the assertions of Physical Activity Guidelines Advisory Committee (2018); Telford et al., (2016) which submitted that exercise has been shown to have many physical benefits which include: improved muscular and cardio respiratory fitness and maintenance of healthy body weight. United States of Health and Human Services (2018) submitted that sports positively influenced individuals to perform everyday activities with good stamina, without becoming overly tired and with the energy to enjoy leisure activities, maintain flexibility, balance, speed of movement, cardio respiratory fitness and musculoskeletal fitness.

Table 2 shows that highly significant number of respondents (936, 90%) opined that participation in weekly sporting activities promote their social well-being with respect to interpersonal interaction, opportunity for making new friends, team work approach, oral communication skills, self-esteem, building confidence in other colleagues, organization skills and discovery of hidden potentials. These findings are in accordance with the submissions of Moeijes et. al. (2018); Maslen (2015) that, active sports participation provides opportunities to learn teamwork, build self-confidence, improve social interaction, self-esteem, getting connected with peers, promotes self-worth and self-esteem. These results further buttress the assertion of Whitehouse (2022) that sports participation help to improve self-esteem, soft social skill, self-confidence and self-belief. As asserted by Oyedele et. al. (2020), sports can also promote social interaction, cooperation, friendship and foster desirable social behaviour such as loyalty, honesty, self-discipline, respect for others and constituted authority.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the study concludes that:

1. Participation in sports promote the physical well-being among community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State.
2. Participation in sports promote the social well-being among community health students at UITH, Amilegbe, Kwara State.

Recommendations

Based on the conclusion of this study, it is hereby recommended that:

1. Continuous mandatory sports participation on weekly basis among students should be encouraged, maintained and well monitored due to their therapeutic effects on their physical well-being.
2. Students' sport representative committee with the support of institutional management should be organizing inter-college competition on yearly basis as this will further foster interpersonal communication, new association and prevents boredom among students.

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