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Research Article

Physical activity among people – Impact on health

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ABSTRACT

A healthy Life paves the way for a better society. The society in which people are hale and healthy will be in the forefront to take part in the nation building process. In this globalized world which is very busy and keeps the people on their heels all the time, people find less time for physical activity. So, it has a severe impact on the Health of the general public. Leave alone older ones, even the young are suffering from stress, obesity, Diabetes, joint pains, cardiac issues, and other related problems. The Government spending on health is also not satisfactory, especially in countries like India. So, Public awareness among people to tackle these health issues is the best solution. Physical activities regularly will reduce the risk of all these problems and keep the people happy. This paper attempts to discuss the need of physical activity and the burden it reduces on public health, considering the growing health expenditures.

Keywords: Healthy life, Public health, Public awareness, Physical activity

Physical activity is a very important and necessary component for a healthy life. Exercising for some time everyday keeps us healthy and away from ailments. A healthy body will keep us active and reduce the risks that we face. It also reduces the medical expenditure and in the process saves the money. It also improves the quality of life. The quality of life not in the sense of being rich or luxurious but in the sense of being healthy. It is related to the status and the ability to lead the life independently. Physical activity improves health-related quality in our lives by having a positive impact on the psychological well-being and also boosting the physical functioning. Among many benefits of physical activity, it also reduces disability, impact, or severity of coronary heart disease, diabetics, hypertension, swelling in the joints, and also problems related to arthritis.

Physical activity is generally defined as an activity that is linked to any type of bodily movement or action, whereas, exercise is a systematically structured and planned activity and is taken up with a motive and a fitness goal in mind. Both these normally refer to muscular activities, heavy or light, and that may be aerobic, as in activities such as walking, jogging, and running, or anaerobic as in activities such as weight lifting and other gym-related activities. Physical fitness can be related to the cardio fitness, respiratory ease, and other related components such as strength, balance, flexibility, and body composition. Normally sedentary individuals who lack physical activity show signs of exercise-related health disorders. A sedentary individual can usually be recognized, by comparing the relative activity levels of others. The Oxford dictionary of sports science and medicine defines a sedentary individual as one who is “relatively inactive and has a lifestyle characterized by a lot of sitting.” Relatively, they are prone to health related problems due to lack or insufficient physical activity.

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In general, the three dimensions of physical activity are frequency, duration, and intensity. Frequency is generally termed as the number of times an activity is performed in a specific time slot or frame. Duration is the complete amount of time taken in performing an activity continuously over a session or accumulated over a specified time, may be a day or a week. Intensity is the energy expended during a specific activity. When it comes to the measurement of the intensity of any physical activity, it is relative to the individual's capacity and can be accurately measured only in scientific or laboratory settings. However, some measurements were taken based on the questionnaires. Although some of the data thus obtained are subject to self-reported bias, much of the data was proved to be fairly accurate and was very much useful in distinguishing active people from inactive ones. With such data at a macro level and implementing certain steps at microlevel and creating awareness among people the increase in physical activity can be shown as a good indicator of good health.

The types of physical activities to be taken up and the intensity of these activities to assess the health outcomes and obtain positive outcomes may vary. However, such data will be useful to have or frame a general opinion on various physical activities that can be taken up to reduce negative health symptoms. Aerobic activities such as running, jogging, or brisk walking that help improve the cardiorespiratory functioning will help in preventing coronary heart diseases. Activities such as bicycling or swimming that cause less strain to the joints and increase joint lubrication and flexibility are helpful in the prevention or delaying the progression of arthritis and related ailments. It decreases the pain, improves self-efficacy and physical function. The intermediate changes in blood pressure causing hypertension, the changes in serum cholesterol, and the impact of diabetes all can be reduced with physical activity. The improved body composition due weight loss will impact insulin sensitivity and glucose tolerance and so a positive impact. Adults should take up vigorous activity such as running for at least 20 min on 3 or more days/week or activities of moderate intensity such as brisk walking for at least 30 min on 5 or more days/week. Apart from these flexibility and muscle strengthening activities should be

taken up on 2 days/week. Studies have proved that there will be improved health condition if physical activity is taken up on a regular basis.

The health of the people is the responsibility of the state. The government should take care of the medical facilities, but with the fast growing demands, it is becoming difficult for the governments to take care of all the health-related problems. On the part of the government, they should create awareness among the people on the positive impact of physical activity on health and how can the expenditure be reduced if the people are healthy. The decision to be active is an individual choice, but there are certain factors that support active lifestyles. From the government side, they should provide activity friendly structures such as safe green spaces, walking, and jogging tracks and enable people to use them. Such structural changes will have effect on the overall physical activity and also aim at change in individual behavior. The general public also must look for natural remedies than medicine for some disorders that can be controlled. Hence, all of us should work together for a healthy society.

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