

Chapter 3

The Impact of Exercise on Mental Health

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ABSTRACT

People today are unaware of the consequences of disregarding both their physical and mental health. Exercise improves sleep, mood, endurance, and cardiovascular fitness while decreasing cholesterol, body weight, and weariness. It has been prescribed for a wide range of medical conditions, including respiratory infections. A recent study reveals that improving aerobic capacity through exercise may improve immune function, lessen the severity of COVID-19, and perhaps help prevent infection. During Ukraine's nationwide lockdown, researchers explored the link between physical exercise and anxiety and melancholy in a large sample of university students. The author investigated the relationship between continuous exercise and reduced feelings of anxiety and sadness. Furthermore, to assess the impact of exercise on cognitive function and memory, as well as its contribution to total cognitive well-being.

INTRODUCTION

People, in this contemporary era, are unaware of the repercussions of ignoring their physical health and mental health as well. However, on the other side, there are also some people who give their overall health the utmost importance. In today's

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world, it is paramount to take care of one's own health. Exercise is one of the best ways to keep ourselves healthy as it has numerous advantages. First and foremost advantage of exercise is that it boosts our mental health. Regular exercise is super good for your health, and doctors agree on this. It helps prevent and manage diseases, and even reduces the chances of dying early by up to 30%. This is true for everyone, no matter their age or race. In the U.S., health experts suggest that all healthy people should aim for 30 minutes of exercise, like brisk walking or something that makes you sweat a bit, at least 5 days a week. Not only does exercise keep you alive and kicking, but it also lowers the risk of getting sick in the first place. Doing about 2 to 2.5 hours of exercise a week is enough to lower your chances of getting chronic diseases. And there's more good news – exercising regularly makes you feel good about yourself and keeps your mind sharp. People who move their bodies often tend to remember things better and stay sharp as they get older. So, go ahead and get moving for a healthier and happier life. (Stivers, 2023) In 2020, when there was Covid-19 outbreak, the physical health of folks was drastically affected and along with it, their mental health was also impacted. Many studies have proven that regular physical activity (PA) has a positive impact on mental health. Exercise not only improves sleep, mood, endurance, and cardiovascular fitness but also reduces factors like cholesterol, body weight, and tiredness. It has been recommended as a prescription for patients with various health conditions, including respiratory diseases. Recent research suggests that having a better aerobic capacity through exercise may improve immune functions, decrease the severity of COVID-19, and even help prevent infection. In a study during the national lockdown in Ukraine, the relationship between PA and anxiety and depression was examined in a large group of university students. Before the pandemic, around 58% of college students in Canada met the recommended WHO guidelines for physical activity. Another study in India found that students with moderate and high PA levels reported lower anxiety and depression compared to those with low PA levels. During the COVID-19 pandemic, only one study has explored the PA levels and mental health of college students. This study, conducted in China, showed that around 56% of students were engaged in moderate to high levels of PA during the coronavirus outbreak, and PA was associated with reduced negative emotions and depression. (Rogowska et al., 2020) The COVID-19 restrictions have significantly impacted communities with physical and/or intellectual disabilities, where reduced physical activity opportunities have the potential to profoundly affect both physical and mental health. In the UK alone, 11 million people have registered disabilities, often accompanied by secondary conditions like coronary heart disease, diabetes, and obesity. Regular moderate or high levels of physical activity are associated with lower risks of these health issues. The World Health Organization recommends that children and young people aged 5–17 with disabilities should aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous-intensity

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