

# INFLUENCE OF EXERCISE ON FUNCTIONAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL FITNESS OF HEALTH WORKERS AND THE SPORT PROFESSIONALS IN LAGOS STATE

BY

**AKINNUBI C.F. (Ph.D)**

**Department Of kinesiology, Health Education and Recreation**

**Faculty of Education**

**Obafemi Awolowo University**

*fakinnubi@yahoo.com*

## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the influence of exercise on functional health and physical fitness of health workers and sport professionals in Lagos State Nigeria. Descriptive research design was used for the study. A total of 340 respondents consisting of 190 health workers and sport professionals were purposively selected for this study. Age range was from 20 to 60 years. A structured questionnaire designed by the investigators was used to collect data for the study. Simple percentages and frequency count were used to the data analysis. The findings showed that majority of the respondents believed that exercise would help the various body systems work effectively and aid digestion, contribute effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual, prevent diseases, helped in attaining physical fitness and good health. Many of the health workers agreed that inability to exercise could be due to inaccessibility to facilities and equipment while sport professionals disagreed to this statement.

There is the need for 3 tiers of the Government to educate the respondents particularly the health workers of the importance of exercise on functional health and physical fitness through mass media; seminars, also provide recreation centers where necessary with adequate equipment and facilities.

**KEYWORDS: Exercise, Functional Health, Physical Fitness, Diseases, Good Health  
Health Workers, Sport Professionals**

## **Introduction**

Human being survival can be influenced by the ability to participate in sustainable physical exercises to make them physically fit. Regular physical exercises do enhance the body system and aid the prevention of various diseases from the people. The habits of maintaining a healthy lifestyle involve regular exercise and nutritious diet, when sedentary lifestyles increase can cause various diseases (WHO 2002). In Nigeria several studies had reported that there is lack of involvement in physical exercise (Sohi and Yusuf, (1987), whereas, Amuchie (1983) stated that in academic setting, people are expected to display high level of involvement in physical exercise, but are always guilty of not being engaged in exercise for good health.

Eating well-balanced diet can help to reduce calories nutrients needed for daily activities and regular exercise. Eating of good foods can aid exercise participation. These balanced foods include fruits, whole grains, vegetables, proteins foods like beans, carbohydrates (Dand 2019). According to Wallace (2002), exercise works on body and joints to make the body significantly flexible and stimulate all organs within slightest time. Caspersen, Powell, Christenson (1985) stated that exercise is a sub-section of regular physical activity that is scheduled, designed, repetitive which has pre- objective to improve or maintain physical suitability of exercise). Physical fitness has attributes that is either health or skill-related. Physical activity exercise and physical fitness are interrelated one another and to health of individuals of various population at

large. Physical activity should be done regularly and can be categorized into work-related, sports, training, domestic and other activities (Caspersen, Powell, Christenson 1985).

In a study conducted by Hebat-Allah, Maha, and Waleed (2020), it was reported that some of the health providers (44.6%) recently engaged in physical exercise. The authors further explained that many of the respondents who were obese and overweight never engaged in physical exercise.. According to World Health Organization (2021), globally, the vital cause of obesity and over-weight is an energy difference between calories consumed and calories used, and are linked to more deaths worldwide than underweight. Exercise helps to avoid diseases and regular exercise do increases individual endurance, thereby making individuals to be able deal with stress and have a sound sleep and have a sense of well-being (Elmagd 2016). In the same vein, Niels, Eco, Toos, Dorret, and Meike (2010) reported that Regular exercise has been explained to be a key contributor to good health while a sedentary lifestyle is slated to be one of the main causes of the increase in obesity at a progressively younger to old age which becomes a major threat to health in today's society.

Regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and manage communicable diseases such as heart diseases stroke, diabetes, several cancers, hypertension maintain healthy body weight and improve mental health and good wellbeing (WHO 2020). Nurses are in optimum situation by playing an imperative role in stimulating public health. Nurses are primarily committed to health promotion by working towards diseases prevention and to adjust the individuals' negative behaviours to positive healthy behaviours (Kemppainen, Tossavainen and Turunen 2013).

According to Ajeigbe (2006), physical fitness is the capability of the body to carry out daily responsibilities with vigor and alertness without undue fatigue to meet increased demands

of life time. According to Daniels (2021), exercise has both physical and mental health benefits. However, any amount of exercise done by individual has benefits that ranges from improving the control of blood glucose, reduce the cardio-vascular risk factors, helps weight loss and also improve mental health. Other benefits are, strengthens the health of bone, build and strengthen muscles, increases chance of having a longer life span, maintain moderate weight, improves brain function, reduces the risk of dementia, also improves cardiovascular health (Daniels 2021), Elmagd (2016), also stated that physical activity and exercise can reduce stress, anxiety, boost muscles and strengthen the malfunctioning of the bone. It also aids in the inhibition and decrease of heart diseases, obesity, cardiovascular diseases and blood sugar instabilities.

According to Slenker Price Roberts and Jurs (1984) Dubbeert and Martin (1986) and Oldridge (1982), reasons for non-participation in recreational physical exercise were given generally as lack of time due to family engagement among adults. while Andrew, Oldridge Parker, Cunningham (1981) reported that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment are important obstacles to exercise. In a study conducted by Sas-Nowosielski and Nowicka (2018), it was revealed that exercise has a lot to offer to human happiness, positive mood, decreased anxiety, depression and elevated level of self-esteem. Beneficial outcomes of engaging in physical exercise help to improve the mental and emotional wellness of human beings (Reed 2021). Facilities and equipment offer avenue for people to participate in physical activity. These equipment and facilities should also cater for the decrease in injuries during use (Gray, Keyzer, Norton, and Dietrich 2014).

Lee and Paffenbarger (1996) asserted that 60% of all U.S. adults today do not involve in physical activity or that exercises are not regularly done. According to Maximin-Agha and Ogah (2006), exercise is believed to be very vital for a healthy life and to note that one should be

committed to protect his/her health to achieve a good health promotion. Exercises can also be useful to rehabilitate the problem of bad habits that generate health hazard like smoking, drinking alcohol, overeating, inactivity and immorality. Exercise also helps to frustrate social problems like social rejection, isolation and segregation (Nwankwo 1984

According to Cunningham and Sullivan (2021), healthcare experts have a key role to play in promoting physical activity mostly among population of poor health due to physical sedentariness. In a study conducted by Cunningham and Sullivan (2021), it was revealed that 347 (70.3%) of the respondents agreed that working or exercising the body for physical fitness is their profession, while 30.0% agreed that they received appropriate training on physical ability. A total of 81.6% respondents agreed that healthcare professionals can play a rise role in stimulating physical fitness. Regular exercise can aid food movement in the body through the digestive system and improve the general health and quality of life of an individual (Pietrangelo, 2019).

In a study conducted by Cunningham and Sullivan (2021), it was revealed that not many of the respondents were aware of the objectives of national guidelines for physical fitness.

The purpose of this paper was to find out the influence of exercise of functional health and physical fitness among the health workers and sport professionals in Lagos State. This study is significant in that it would allow the general populace in Lagos State to know the consequences of exercise to the body and health of individuals.

### **Research Objectives**

1. The involvement of exercise activity will help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

2. Participation in exercise will contribute effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.
3. Participation in exercise will effectively prevent diseases among the health workers and sport professionals in the study area.
4. Good diet will effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health among the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.
5. Inaccessibility to facilities and equipment will contribute effectively to inability to participation in exercise among health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

### **Methodology**

The participants for the study were 190 health workers and 150 sport professionals making a total of three hundred and forty respondents. These respondents were from selected areas of Lagos state. These were the professionals in sports and health workers in Ikorodu, Ketu and the environments. A self-structured Questionnaire tagged IEFHPPF was the main instrument used for this study. The face validity of the instrument was verified by experts on this field and was deemed fit for the study, while the reliability of the instrument was done by administering the questionnaire on some respondents that were not the real member of the original participants of the research study. After three weeks, the questionnaire was also repeated on the participants and it was then found reliable for the study. Participants in the health line and the Physical and Health Education personnel were selected from different areas of the state using convenient and accidental sampling technique. The questionnaire was given to the respondents by the researcher at their work places. The data were analyzed using the information obtained from the questionnaire submitted by the respondents. Frequency count of each of the item was done and tables were used to present relevant information. The data, when collected was analyzed in a tabular form using simple percentage.

**Demographic data for the study**

**Table I: Frequency distribution of percentages of respondents by gender and occupation in the study area.**

VARIABLE	GENDER		TOTAL	PERCENTAGE
	MALE	FEMALE		
Health Workers	15	175	190	55.9
Sport Professionals	40	110	150	44.1
Total	55	285	340	100

From the table above, a total of 15 males and 175 females making a total of 190 (55.9%) health workers participated in the research study, while 40 males and 110 female making a total of 190 (55.9%) sport professionals also participated in the research study.

**Table II: Frequency distribution of percentages of respondents by occupation and age range.**

Variables	Below 20 years		20-25		26-30		31-35		36-40		41-45		46-50		51-55		56-60		Total
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F			
	Health workers	-	-	-	12	-	20	1	24	2	30	4	24	4	34	4	24	1	
Sport Professionals	-	-	2	22	4	16	3	14	6	16	4	12	6	20	6	16	2	1	150
Total	-	-	2	34	4	36	4	38	8	46	8	36	10	54	10	40	3	7	340

**Research Question I:** Will involvement in exercise activity help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

**Table III:** Frequency distribution of percentages analysis of how involvement in exercise activities will help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

VARIABLES	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	TOTAL %
Health workers	130 (38.3)	60 (17.6)	190 (55.9)
Sport Professionals	150 (44.1)	- -	150 (44.1)
Total	280 (82.4)	60 (17.6)	340 (100%)

Table III showed that the health workers of 130 (38.3%) respondents and all 150 (44.1%) Sport Professionals agreed that exercise activity would help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion. While a total of 60 (17.6%) health workers disagreed that exercise activity would help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion. This finding of the above indicated that majority of both the health workers and Sport Professionals believed that exercise could be very important to one's health and physical fitness and that involvement in exercise activity would helped the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion.

**Research Question II:** Will participation in exercise contribute effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area

Table IV: Frequency distribution of percentages analysis of how participation in exercise will contribute effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual by both the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

VARIABLES	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	TOTAL %
Health workers	150 ( 44.1%)	40(11.8%)	190 (55.9%)
Sport Professionals	150 ( 44.1%)	-	150 (44.1%)
Total	300 (88.2%)	40 (11.8%)	340 (100%)

Table IV showed that all 150 (44.1) sport professionals and 150 (44.1) health workers out of 190 (55.9%) identified that participation in exercise would contributed effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual, while 40 (11.8%) health workers disagreed to the above statement that participation in exercise would contributed effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual. This finding of the above showed that majority of both health workers and Sport Professionals believed that participation in exercise would contributed effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual

**Research Question III:** Will participation in exercise effectively prevent diseases between the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.



**Table V:** Frequency distribution of percentages analysis of how participation in exercise will effectively prevent diseases between the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

VARIABLES	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	TOTAL %
Health workers	68 (20%)	122 ( 35.9%)	190 (55.9%)
Sport Professional	140 (41.2%)	10 (2.9%)	150 (44.1%)
Total	208 (61.2%)	132 (38.8)	340 (100%)

Table V above indicated that a total of 68 (20%) Health workers and 140 (41.2%) sport professionals agreed that exercise could help prevent diseases, whereas a total of 122 (35.9%) health workers and 10 (2.9%) sport professionals disagreed that exercise could help prevent diseases. This statement of many Sport Professionals agreed that exercise could help prevent diseases was due to the fact that sport professionals knew much about the benefits of exercise on fitness and diseases. But, majority of the health workers 122 (35.9%) respondents disagreed that exercise could help prevent diseases. This statement from the health workers could be that they were not conversant or not knowledgeable enough to know the importance of exercise to prevention of diseases.

**Research Question IV:** Will good diet effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health among the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area

**Table VI:** Frequency distribution of percentages analysis of how good diet will effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health between the health workers and the sport professionals in the study area

VARIABLES	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	TOTAL %
Health workers	164 (48.2%)	26 (7.7%)	190 (55.9%)
Sport Professionals	136 (40%)	14 (4.1%)	150 (44.1%)
Total	200 (88.2%)	40 (11.8%)	340 (100%)

Table VI showed that a total of 164 (48.2%) health workers and 136 (40%) sport professionals agreed that good diet could effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health while

a total of 26 (7.7%) health workers and 14 (4.1%) sport professionals totally disagreed with this statement. It could be seen that very many of both Health workers and sport professionals' respondents agreed with the statement of good diet would effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health. This could be so, in that they might understand the importance and benefit of good diet in attaining physical fitness and good health.

**Research Question V:** Inaccessibility to facilities and equipment will contribute effectively to inability to participation in exercise among health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

**Table VII:** Frequency distribution of percentages analysis of how inaccessibility to facilities and equipment will contribute effectively to inability to participation in exercise among health workers and the sport professionals in the study area.

VARIABLES	AGREED %	DISAGREED %	TOTAL %
Health workers	140 (41.2%)	50 (14.7%)	190 (55.9%)
Sport Professionals	14 (4.1%)	136 (40%)	150 (44.1%)
Total	140 (41.2%)	200 (58.8%)	340 (100%)

A careful observation of table VII revealed that a total of 140 (41.2%) health workers and very few respondents of 14 (4.1%) out of 150 sport professionals agreed that inability to participate in exercise could be due to inaccessibility to facilities and equipment. But 50 (14.7%) out of 190 health workers and 136 (40%) out of 150 sport professionals disagreed to the statement. The above statement showed that sport professionals did not believe that if there were no facilities and equipment for exercise, participation in exercise could be very difficult. This was because they were professionals of sports. Whereas, very many of the Health workers, 140 (41.2%) did agree that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment could disqualified people from participating effectively in exercise. The above statement from the Health workers might be due to the facts that they did not know that facilities and equipment could be improvised for effective participate in exercise.

## **DISCUSSION.**

One of the findings of the above indicated that majority of both the health workers and Sport Professionals believed that exercise could be very important to one's health and physical fitness and that involvement in exercise activity would help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion. This is in line with Pietrangelo, (2019), who indicated that regular exercise can aid food movement in the body through the digestive system and improve the general health and quality of life of an individual

Another finding showed that majority of both health workers and Sport Professionals believed that participation in exercise would contribute effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual. This corroborates the finding of ODPHP (2021), who stated that exercise has a lot to offer to human happiness, positive mood, decreased anxiety, depression and elevated level of self-esteem. Beneficial outcome of physical exercise help to improve the mental and emotional wellness of human beings.

Further finding showed that majority of the sport professional agreed that exercise could help prevent diseases This corroborates WHO (2020), which indicates that regular physical activity is proven to help prevent and manage communicable diseases such as heart diseases stroke, diabetes, several cancers, hypertension maintain healthy body weight and improve mental health and good wellbeing and Elmagd (2016), that exercise aids in the prevention and reduction of heart diseases, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, blood sugar instabilities.

One of the findings showed that very many respondents agreed that good diet would effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health. This is in line with Dand (2019) who stated that eating well-balanced diet can help to reduce calories nutrients needed for daily

activities and regular exercise. Eating of good foods can aid exercise participation and these balanced foods include fruits, whole grains, vegetables, proteins foods like beans, carbohydrates.

Majority of the sport professionals disagreed that inability to participate in exercise could be due to inaccessibility to facilities and equipment. This negates the finding of Andrew, Oldridge Parker, Cunningham (1981) who reported that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment were important obstacles to exercise.

Many of the Health workers did agree that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment could disqualify people from participating effectively in exercise. This collaborates the statement of Gray, Keyzer, Norton, and Dietrich (2014), which stated that facilities and equipment offered avenue for people to participate in physical activity.

## **CONCLUSION**

Majority of the respondents (150 sport professionals and 150 health workers (300 (88.2%) out of 390 respondents) said participation in exercise could contributed effectively to physical, mental and social wellbeing of an individual.

The sport professionals so much believed that exercise is very important to one's health, and that without exercise the health of an individual is in problem. When exercise is participated in, aids digestion and also helps the various body systems to work effectively and proficiently. Very many of the respondents with 280 (82.4) respondents agreed that involvement in exercise activities would help the various body systems to work effectively and aid digestion.

Health workers (122 (35.9%) respondents did not believe that exercise could help prevent diseases.

Many of the respondents agreed that the good diet would effectively help in attaining physical fitness and good health. This could be so, in that they might understand the importance and benefit of good diet in attaining physical fitness and good health.

Very many Health workers, 140 (41.2%) did agree that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment could disqualified people from participating effectively in exercise.

Very few respondents 14 (4.1%) sport professionals categorically agreed that inaccessibility to facilities and equipment would contribute effectively to inability to participation in exercise.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

- There should be awareness of exercise, functional health and physical fitness on individual's health and personal fitness through dissemination of information in various ways- through the Television, posters, magazine, projectors, on Radio e.t.c. by the 3 tier of the government (Local, State and Federal)
- The 3 tiers of government should also provide recreation centers to the nook and corners of towns, villages where necessary with adequate equipment and facilities.
- There should be seminar and workshop organized by the 3 tiers of government to disseminate information to workers, civil servants particularly health workers and sport professionals on how exercise could be leisured to prevent people from diseases and to be fit.
- The 3 tiers of government should also create awareness on exercise, functional health and physical fitness that there could be improvisation of equipment and facilities to train and keep fit.

- The general populace should also make it point of duty to always engage in exercise to keep fit and for one to have functional health.

## REFERENCES

- Ajeigbe Yaqub Issa (2006): Managing Stress through Exercise and Recreation institutions of Learning. A case study of Kwara State College of Education Ilorin Nigerian School health Journal Volume 18 number 1. 85 – 90.
- Amechie P.A (1983): Socialization of College Female into Sport. A stud) of Childhood influence. Journal of education Research Association Maximin 1992. 57-68
- Andrew G.M, Oldridge N.B. Parker .1.0 and Cunninggharm (1981): Reasons for drop out from Exercise Programme in Post Coronary Patients. Medical Science Sport Exercise 13:1, 164-168
- Caspersen C.J., Powell K.E., Christenson G.M.(1985): Physical Activity, Exercise, and Physical Fitness. Definitions and Distinctions for Health-Related Research. Public Health Report 100 (2) 126-131
- Cunningham C. Sullivan R.O. (2020): Why physical activity matters for older adults in a time of Pandemic *European Rev. Aging Phys. Act.* 17 : 17-20:
- Cunningham C. Sullivan R.O. (2021): Healthcare Professionals Promotion of Physical Activity with Older Adults: A Survey of Knowledge and Routine Practice *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 18(11): 6064.
- Dana S.K. (2019): Eating the Right Foods for Exercise. Nutrition is Important for Fitness healthline [www..healthline.com/](http://www.healthline.com/) (Retrieved on 29/09/2022)
- Daniels L. (2021): What are the Mental and Physical Health Benefits of Exercise? Medical News Today. [www.medicalnewstoday.com](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com)
- Dubbert P.M and Martins J.E (1986): Exercise Application in Behavioral Medicine: Current Future Directions Journal of consulting Clinical Psychology: 50. 1004- 1017
- Elmagd M.A. (2016): Benefits, need and importance of daily exercise *International Journal Physical Education, Sports and Health* 3(5) 22-27
- Fentern P.H. Bassey E.J and Tumbuli N.B (1988): The New Case for Exercise. London: Sports Council and Health Authority. Wiltshire 130-135.

- Gray S., Keyzer P., Norton K., and Dietrich J., (2014): Equipment and Environment of Fitness Facilities: The Perspective of Fitness Industry Employee. *British Journal of Medicine* 48(7):601-2
- Pietrangelo A., (2019): The Best Exercise to help Digestion.  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/epi/exercises-digestion>
- Hebat-Allah M. S. G, Maha M. W. and Waleed S.E. (2020): Perceived benefits and barriers towards exercise among healthcare providers in Ain Shams University Hospitals, Egypt. *Journal of the Egyptian Public Health Association* 19: 1-13
- Kemppainen V., Tossavainen K., and Turunen H., (2013): Nurses' roles in health promotion practice: An integrative review. *Health Promotion International* 28,4. 490-501.  
<https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/das034>
- Lee I.M and Paffenbanger (1996): How much Physical Activity is Optimal for health Methodological Considerations. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sports*. 67: 11- 28.
- Maximin-Agha E M., and Ogah P.O. (2006): Enhancing Mental Health through Exercise. *Nigerian School health Journal*. 18,1. 115-118
- Niels Vander Aa, Eco J.C Geus, Toos C.EM Van Beysterveldt, Dorret I. Boomsma and Meike Bartels. 2010. Genetic influences on Individual Differences in Exercise Behaviour during Adolescence. *International journal of pediatrics (2010) Article ID 138345, 8 pages doi:10.1155/2010/138345*
- Nwankwo E.I (1984): Physical-Physiological Adaptation of University Male Students to a Twelve-Week Endurance Programme. An unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan, Ibadan.
- Oldridge N.B. (1982): Compliance and Exercise in Primary and Secondary Prevention of Coronary Heart Diseases. *A review of preventive Medicine II*, 56-70.
- Reed R.P. (2021): Physical Activity is Good for the Mind and the Body. *Health and Well-being Matters*. Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion [health.gov](http://health.gov) (Retrieved on 28/09/2022)
- Sas-Nowosielski K. and Nowicka M. (2018): Understanding Exercise Intentions Among Women Exercising In Fitness Classes. *Central For Europeanj Sport Science Medicine* 21(1) 41-7
- Slenker S. T., Price J.H., Roberts S.M. and Jurs S.G. (1984). Joggers versus Non exercisers. An analysis of Knowledge, Attitude and Beliefs about Jogg. *Res. Quarterly for exercise and Sport*. 55: 371-378

Sohi A.S. and Yusuf K.B. (1987): Parental Influence on the Socialization of Male and Female Athletes into competitive Sports. West African Journal of Health Education. Ibadan. 3 and 4: 21 -25

Wallace J.P (2002): Health Benefits of exercise and fitness in Gary Kamen (ed) Foundation of exercise science. Philadelphia: Eippincott.

World Health Organization (2002): Physical Inactivity a leading cause of disease and disability, warns WHO <https://www.who.int/news/> (Retrieved on 19/09/2022)

World Health Organization (2020): Physical Activity- World Health Organization (WHO) <https://www.who.int>. Facet sheets> Detail (Retrieved on 03/10/2022).

World Health Organization (2021): Obesity and Over-weight. Geneva: World Health Organization <https://www.who.int/newsroom/fact.sheets/details/obesity-and-overweight> (Retrieved on 18/09/2022).

IJSER