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Participating In Physical Exercise and Weight Control on Healthy Lifestyle Of Female Lecturers Of Michael Okpara University Of Agriculture, Umudike Abia State

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Abstract

The study was on participation in physical exercise and weight control for a healthy lifestyle of female lecturers of Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State. Four objectives and research questions guided the study. The study employed enumeration survey design. The area of the study was College of Education (COED) in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, (MOUAU) in Abia State. The population of the study was 69 female lecturers from the seven Departments in COED. The study adopted a purposive sampling technique as the researchers chose to examine the entire female lecturers in the departments in COED. The instrument for data collection was 41 items structured 5 points Likert scale questionnaire. Data were analyzed using mean to answer the research questions. The findings of the study showed 10 types of exercise and five types of weight control that the female lecturers must embark on, and eight reasons why physical exercise and weight control, are necessary as a lifestyle for female lecturers. Furthermore, the findings revealed eight problems that are usually associated with lack of physical exercise and weight control and finally eight special advantages of participating in physical exercise and weight control. Examples of the findings on physical exercise and weight control include clapping of hand, boxing the air, and swimming. Others are to eat balanced diet and make exercise a part of lifestyle. On the reasons for participation in physical exercise and weight control, findings include that exercise burns calories, helps heart and lungs work well and regulates flow of blood. In conclusion, one cannot be fit unless physical exercise is taken. By physically exercising regularly one will enjoy the benefit of fitness and weight control. Based on the finding's recommendations were made, female lecturers of COED in MOUAU must make physical exercise and weight control their lifestyle.

Key Words: Physical Exercise, Weight Control, Healthy, Lifestyle

Introduction

The effort to achieve and maintain certain weight through diet, physical exercise, or both is known as weight control. It involves keeping a balance between the energy, or calories, consumed in food and the calories expended in physical activity. The main components of the sound weight (fat) control program are working out, proper diet and changes in behavior.

Word Health Organization (WHO, 2022) defines physical activities as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movements including during leisure time for transport to get to and from places or as part of a person's work. As a concept, exercise is a subset of physical activity that is planned, structured and repetitive and has a final or an intermediate objective. The improvement or maintenance of physical fitness. Physical fitness is a set of attributes that are either health or skill

related. Set Point Theory (2021) states that the human body tries to maintain its weight within a preferred range. Many people stay within a more or less small range of body weight throughout their adult life. Some people's systems may keep them lean while younger but allow them to gain weight after middle age. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight include healthy eating, physical activity, optimal sleep, and stress education.

A healthy lifestyle among females in Abia State is a thing of concern. Briggs (2018) recommended that females should be taught some exercises, good diet pattern, posture and relation they need in order to be physically fit and healthy. The era of living a sedentary lifestyle from one bus to air-conditioned room has gone. One should live a life of physical activities in order to be sound and healthy.

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are increasing, and these refers to a group of conditions that are not mainly caused by an acute infection, resulting in long - term treatment and care. These conditions include cancers, cardiovascular disease, diabetes and chronic lung illness throughout the world and causes major problems in developing countries. Globally, NCDs are responsible for 63% of all deaths (36million out of 57 million deaths) and it is accounted for 80% of the global burden of diseases. Ali, Gholamrza Reza Shrine, (2016) indicates that 53% of the causes of death are related to human lifestyles. Due to unhealthy lifestyle, there happened a great increase in the prevalence and incidence of many chronic conditions, including obesity, atherosclerosis, and coronary heart diseases (CHD). Among these chronic conditions, the prevalence of obesity as a serious epidemic health problem has been increased both in developing and developed countries which is as a result of unhealthy eating and physical inactivity in a sedentary lifestyle. Obesity is the fifth leading cause of mortality and considered as a risk factor for many diseases such as cancer, hypertension, Type 2 diabetes, metabolic syndrome and CHD in a way that 44% of Type 2 diabetes, 23% of ischemic heart and 7 – 41% of cancers are attributed to overweight and obesity. Nonetheless, it is possible to tackle this risk factors by changing and modifying lifestyle which would in turn, decrease the rate of chronic diseases morbidity and mortality. (Pender, Murdaugh & Parsons 2010).

Lifestyle is a way of living of individuals, families and societies which can be healthy or unhealthy in terms of personal behaviors such as nutrition, physical activity, and stress management. A healthy lifestyle may result in better health and happiness, and in contrast an unhealthy lifestyle may cause illness and morbidity, (Saffari, Amini, Efercha, Ardebili, Scanainazsah, Mohmoudi & Piper, 2013). Pender et.al (2010), indicated that health promoting behaviors (HPBs) including self-initiated actions, behaviors, and health perceptions may have an impact on individual's happiness and wellbeing. Health promoting behaviors comprise six-dimensions including health responsibilities, physical activity, nutrition, interpersonal relations, spiritual growth and stress management. Hence, the importance of the study is to create awareness of participation in physical exercise and management control.

Statement of the Problem

A healthy lifestyle among females is a thing of concern. Most of the female lecturers in Michael Okpara University of Agricultural Umudike are living a sedentary lifestyle from one bus to air-conditioned room. Statistics indicates that 53% of the causes of death are related to human lifestyle. It must be noted that non-communicable diseases (NCDs) are increasing. Due to unhealthy lifestyle, there happen a great increase in the prevalence and incidence of many chronic conditions, including obesity, atherosclerosis, and coronary heart disease (CHD).

According to Briggs (2018) females should be taught some exercise, good diet pattern, posture and relation needed in order to be physically fit and healthy. Achieving and maintaining a healthy weight include healthy eating, physical activity, optimal sleep, and stress education. If individuals can practice properly and routinely, it would result in better health and lifestyle.

Looking at the female lecturers at College of Education MOUAU and the seemingly sedentary lifestyle most of them are practicing and their eating habits, there is an assumption that many may experience a wide range of unhealthy habits such as high level of fast-food intake, low level of physical activity and irregular sleep as well. Again, given their young ages most of the lecturers believe that they are in good health, and this would be possible reason why for not being very conscious of their health behavior (Wei, Aiada, Ueda, Fukumoto, Minamoto & Ueda 2012). According to Robbinson (2016), many females ignore exercise and weight control during youth. Most females, before and after lectures engage in social media activities instead of participating in exercise and weight control exercises. The problem of the study therefore is to investigate the female lecturers' lifestyle in MOUAU, especially with aspect to their involvement in physical exercise and weight control.

Objective of the Study

General objective of the study was to determine female lecturers' participation in physical exercise and weight control for healthy lifestyle. Specifically, the study sought to determine:

1. Identify type of physical exercise and weight control that female lecturers of COED in MOUAU participate in,
2. Establish benefits to participate in physical exercise and weight control by female lecturers of COED in MOUAU
3. Identify problems associated with non – participation in physical exercise and weight control of female lecturers of COED in MOUAU
4. The advantages of participating in physical exercises and weight control by female lecturers of COED in MOUAU.

Methodology

Design of the Study

The study employed enumeration survey design; this is the same as census survey. Every member of the population was studied. The study took place in College of Education in Michael Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, Abia State.

Population of the Study

The target population was 69 female lecturers from seven Departments in COED in MOUAU.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The study adopted a purposive sampling technique as the researchers chose to examine the entire female population of the lecturers that were in College of Education in MOUAU, since the population is small and can be managed effectively.

Instrument for Data Collection

The instrument for data collection was a 41 – items structured five – points Likert – scale questionnaire developed based on the specific objectives of the study and extensive literature review. The instrument which was on female lecturers' participation in physical exercise and weight control for a healthy lifestyle was to collect data (responses from the respondents on the four research objectives that guided the study).

Validation and Reliability of the instrument

Three experts validated the instrument for the appropriateness of the items. Two of the experts were from Agricultural and Vocational Education Department, while one was from Science Education Department. A reliability coefficient of 0.74 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Reliability Test Method.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers personally administered the questionnaire, the questionnaire were retrieved from the respondents after one week. Only 62 duly completed questionnaires were retrieved giving 90% return ratio. The incomplete retrieval was due to some of the staff not being reached at the point of the administration of the instrument and the retrieval.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using

descriptive statistics by the application of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.10, to determine the mean of the items. A mean rating of 3.0 and above was regarded as "Agree" for an item; while any item having less has 3.0. regarded as 'Disagree'.

Result and Discussion

The findings of the study were obtained from the answers to research objectives as data collected and analyzed.

Table 1 reveals that six out of the 10 physical exercises identified were accepted as the ones that female lecturers participate inadequately, while they were not participating in four. Again, out of the five identified weight control measures given, the way the questions were skewed; both positively and negatively, the female lecturers were only good participating in the eating of balanced diet. The table therefore shows that the female lecturers of COED in MOUAU should improve in their participation in physical exercises such as; boxing the air, kicking the air, swimming, cycling in the air, and walking a distance. With respect to weight control, the female lecturers should; eat equal calories as they burn, avoid eating more calories than they burn and burning more calories than they eat. They should generally make physical exercise part of their lifestyle.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Respondents on Physical Exercise and Weight Control that Female Lecturers Participate in.

S/N	Type of physical exercise and weight control	Mean	Remark
A	**Physical Exercise**		
1	Clapping of hand	3.75	Agree
2.	Boxing the air	2.98	Disagree
3	Kicking the air	3.00	Disagree
4	Arm Stretching	3.60	Agree
5	Swimming	2.86	Disagree
6	Dancing	4.00	Agree
7	Jogging	3.80	Agree
8	Deep breathing	3.50	Agree
9	Cycling in the air	2.90	Disagree
10	Walking a distance	2.66	Disagree
B	**Weight control**		
11	Eat balanced diet	3.85	Agree
12	Eat equal calories intake	2.77	Disagree
13	Eat more calories than they burn	3.56	Agree
14	Burn more calories than intake	2.96	Disagree
15	Make exercise a part of lifestyle	2.81	Disagree

Data on table 2, show eight reasons why female lecturers of COED in MOUAU should participate in exercise and weight control. All the reasons were agreed on with exercise helping the heart and lungs work well ranking the highest with a mean of 4.12; while exercise helping to maintain good posture ranked lowest with a mean of 3.61. Nonetheless, the importance of exercise and weight control cannot be over-emphasized.

Table 2: Mean Scores OF Respondents on the benefit of Participated in Physical Exercise and Weight Control by Female Lecturers.

S/N	Reasons for Physical exercise and weight control	Mean	Remark
1.	Exercise burns calorie	3.86	Agree
2.	Exercise helps heart and lungs work well	4.12	Agree
3.	Exercise tones the muscles	3.32	Agree
4.	Exercise helps to control appetite	3.65	Agree
5.	Exercise helps to maintain health all the time	3.83	Agree
6.	Exercise helps to maintain neither overweight or underweight	3.63	Agree
7.	Exercise regulates flow of blood	3.80	Agree
8.	Exercise helps to maintain good posture	3.61	Agree

Data on table 3 show nine different health problems that are associated with female lecturers of COED in MOUAU not participating in physical exercise and weight control. Heart disease ranked highest with a mean score of 4.12; while cancer ranked lowest with a mean score of 3.53. Given the diseases associated with not participating in physical exercise and weight control, every female lecturer must see physical exercise and weight control as a prerequisite for healthy lifestyle.

Table 3: Mean Scores of Respondents on the Problems Associated with Female Lecturers not Participating in Physical Exercise and Weight Control.

S/N	Problem associating with not participating in physical exercise and weight control	Mean	Remark
1.	Heart disease	4.12	Agree
2.	Obesity	3.98	Agree
3.	High blood pressure	3.78	Agree
4.	High blood cholesterol	3.67	Agree
5.	Types 2 diabetes	3.55	Agree
6.	Cancer	3.53	Agree
7.	Cramps	3.64	Agree
8.	Stroke	3.81	Agree

Data on table 4 show nine advantages of physical exercise and weight control. Respondents agreed with all the items listed as advantages of physical exercise and weight control; with physical and mental stamina ranking highest with a mean score of 4.42, while weight maintenance ranked the least with a mean score of 3.54. Nonetheless, all the advantages ranked well above the acceptance mean which stood at 3.50. This shows that physical exercise and weight control must be practiced by every female lecturer for a healthy lifestyle.

Table 4: Mean Scores of Respondents on the Advantages of Female Lecturers of COED in MOUAU Participating in Physical Exercise and Weight Control

S/N	Advantages of physical exercise and weight control	Mean	Remark
1.	Weight maintenance	3.54	Agree
2.	Reduced high blood pressure	4.02	Agree
3.	Reduced risk of osteoporosis and falls	3.58	Agree
4.	Reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety	3.66	Agree
5.	Reduced risk of type 2 diabetes, heart attack, stroke, and several	3.82	Agree
6.	forms of cancer		
7.	Reduced arthritis pain and associated disability	3.56	Agree
8.	Healthy growth	3.64	Agree
9.	Physical and mental stamina	4.42	Agree
10.	Ability to relax and sleep well	4.04	Agree

Discussion of Findings

The objectives of this study was to determine female lecturer's participation in physical exercise and weight control for healthy lifestyle. It must be noted that university lecturers are future decision makers for institutions, organizations, communities and countries as well. Considering the importance of their health, support provision for health promoting behaviors among female lecturers should be a priority for policymakers and health care professionals to provide community-based services aiming at helping to develop a healthy lifestyle. Little wonder why Briggs (2018) recommended that females should be taught some exercise, good diet pattern, posture and relation they need in order to be physically fit and healthy.

The overall findings show that female lecturers of COED in MOUAU were participating in five out of ten physical exercises, more than they were participating in five others. The physical exercise they participated in as required include clapping and stretching, dancing and jogging, and deep breathing. They were found wanting in boxing the air, kicking the air, swimming, cycling in the air, and walking a distance. With respect to weight control, they were only good in eating balanced diet. They were not eating equal calories as they burn, rather they eat more calories than they burn. However, they were not burning more calories than they eat. Of major concern is the fact that they were yet to make physical exercise a part of their lifestyle. Little wonder why Orji (2016) posited that physical exercise gives one weight at right level of life.

The eight reasons for physical exercise and weight control were all accepted by the female lecturers. Physical exercise and weight control for helping the heart and lungs work well ranked highest among other reasons.

Among all the diseases that were associated with female lecturers not participating in physical exercise and weight control, heart disease ranked highest. Given the dangers of heart disease, physical exercise and weight control cannot be played with. In agreement with this view, Briggs (2018) opined that one should live a life of physical activities to be sound and healthy.

Every female lecturer of COED in MOUAU should appreciate the importance and advantages of physical exercise and weight control. The findings of this study established physical and mental stamina as one of the highest-ranking advantages of physical exercise and weight control. Considering the possible role of appropriate diet and physical activity on the improvement of female lectures of COED in MOUAU health, and the affordability and cost effectiveness of lifestyle changes in controlling NCDs, it must be noted from literature that globally, NCDs are responsible for 63% of all deaths (36 million out of 57 million deaths) and it is accounted for 80% of the global burden on diseases. This makes healthy lifestyle among females in Abia State a thing of concern. More attention should be paid to exercise and weight control (WHO 2015).

According to Robbinson (2016), many females ignore exercise and weight control during youth. Ali Gholamaza Rega Shrine (2016), statistics indicates that 53% of the causes of death are related human lifestyle:

Due to unhealthy live style, there happened a great increase in the prevalence and incidence of many chronic conditions, including obesity, atherosclerosis, and coronary heart disease (CHO). A healthy lifestyle results in better health and happiness, and in contrast an unhealthy lifestyle are risk factors for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and tend to be clustered with a trajectory that extends from adolescence to adulthood (Song et al. BMC public Health 2023)

Conclusion and Recommendation

Health is wealth as the saying goes. One cannot be fit unless physical exercise is taken. By physically exercising regularly one will enjoy the benefits of fitness and weight control. The reasons for participating in regular activities cannot be underestimated. Physical exercise and body control help to maintain a healthy weight; because calories are burned, heart and lungs work well, muscular cavity are toned and most times appetites are controlled by individuals. A more sensible approach to controlling one's weight is to combine a good diet with physical exercise.

Four recommendations were made based on the findings:

1. Female lecturers of COED in MOUAU should generally make physical exercise part of their lifestyle, by living a life of physical activities combined with good diet in order to be sound and healthy.
2. Female lecturers of COED in MOUAU should be brought to the consciousness that the risk factors of heart disease can be tackled by changing and modifying lifestyles which, in turn decrease the rate of chronic diseases, morbidity and mortality.
3. Provision for health promoting behaviors among female lecturers should be made a priority for policy makers and health care professionals to provide institution and community – based services aiming at helping to develop healthy lifestyles in Abia State.

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