

Recreational Sports' Impact on the Health of Iraqi Women Workers

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Abstract:

Any society's growth and development depend on having a lively and healthy population. Due to the reduced physical demands of modern technical and industrial cultures, people—especially female employees—suffer from various bodily discomforts. In this situation, physical activity is essential to preserving and enhancing function, health, and quality of life. The ultimate purpose of this research is to determine the impact of sports on human health, particularly among Iraqi women workers, and to accomplish sustainable objectives for women's health. The investigation was conducted using a literature review strategy. According to the current study, sports raise not only physical efficiency but also mental and social well-being. Sport provides the natural foundation for an independent and self-determined life by encouraging the process of continuous adaptation to changing circumstances. As a result, motor exercise can be used to improve one's quality of life. The human body has several different adaptations that go hand in hand with regular physical activity. These comprise the immune system, the endocrine system, the metabolism, the cardiopulmonary system, the skeletal and muscular systems, the brain, and mental function. Regular exercise improves and maintains health. Starting regular physical activity early in life and continuing it throughout is especially beneficial to one's health. Furthermore, sports can provide opportunities for social, physical, or natural encounters. The researchers also suggested that everyone become more aware of the importance of Iraqi women participating in sports.

Keywords: Iraqi Women Workers, health, sports.

الملخص

يعتمد نمو وتطور أي مجتمع على وجود سكان نشيطين وأصحاء. وبسبب انخفاض المتطلبات البدنية للثقافات التقنية والصناعية الحديثة، يعاني الناس - وخاصة الموظفات - من مجموعة من الإزعاجات الجسدية. وفي هذه الحالة، يعد النشاط البدني ضروريًا للحفاظ على الصحة وتعزيز الوظيفة ونوعية الحياة. الهدف النهائي من هذا البحث هو تحديد تأثير الرياضة على صحة الإنسان، وخاصة بين العاملات العراقيات، وتحقيق أهداف مستدامة لصحة المرأة. تم إجراء التحقيق باستخدام استراتيجية مراجعة الأدبيات. وفقًا للدراسة الحالية، فإن الرياضة لا ترفع الكفاءة البدنية فحسب، بل ترفع أيضًا من الرفاهة العقلية والاجتماعية.

توفر الرياضة الأساس الطبيعي لحياة مستقلة ومحددة ذاتيًا من خلال تشجيع عملية التكيف المستمر مع الظروف المتغيرة. نتيجة لذلك، يمكن استخدام التمارين الحركية لتحسين نوعية حياة المرء. يتمتع جسم الإنسان بعدة تكيفات مختلفة تسير جنبًا إلى جنب مع النشاط البدني المنتظم. وتشمل هذه الجهاز المناعي، والجهاز الصماء، والتمثيل الغذائي، والجهاز القلبي الرئوي، والأنظمة الهيكلية والعضلية، والدماغ، والوظيفة العقلية. تعمل التمارين المنتظمة على تحسين الصحة والحفاظ عليها. إن البدء في ممارسة النشاط البدني المنتظم في وقت مبكر من الحياة ومواصلته طوال الحياة مفيد بشكل خاص لصحة الفرد. علاوة على ذلك، يمكن للرياضة أن توفر فرصًا للقاءات الاجتماعية أو البدنية أو الطبيعية. اقترح الباحثون أيضًا أن يصبح الجميع أكثر وعيًا بأهمية مشاركة المرأة العراقية في الرياضة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العاملات العراقيات، الصحة، الرياضة.

Introduction:

A healthy and lively population is essential for a society's growth and development. People, particularly female employees, experience a variety of bodily discomforts as a result of modern technical and industrial cultures' lowered physical needs. Exercising allows you to maintain more physical health and independence, making your life easier. Regular exercise and dosage can permanently alter a person's basic mood. A person wants everything that will lead to peace of mind, well-being, and an improvement in the quality of his life, and considers it the ultimate and absolute objective. The notion of quality of life has received significant attention in medical sciences, sociology, economics, and politics, and it is regarded as a relatively new concept in psychological legacy. The term "quality of life" has emerged as one of the topics in the field of positive psychology, which is a modern field concerned with studying positive traits and aspects of human strength to assist individuals in exhibiting productive behaviors, contributing to personal and societal growth, and maintaining mental health **(Martella and Ryan, 2016, 351–357)**. This suggests that exercising boosts labor productivity for working women, whether at home, at work, or in society as a whole. Health sports which are operated in many health care services aim to increase, maintain, or restore health.

Quality of life is "the extent of an individual's feeling of contentment and happiness and his ability to satisfy his needs through the quality of the environment in which he lives, and the services provided to him in the health, social, educational, and psychological fields, with good time management and benefit from it," according to **Mahmoud Abdel Halim Mansi and Ali Mahdi Kazem (2010,41–60)**.

As a result, movement can be seen as the foundation for quality of life, and motor activity might provide life support. "Sports activity of any kind has a positive effect on the usual well-being of many groups of individuals," according to **Singer (2000, 289–336)**, who summarizes numerous studies on the effects of sport.

Continuous participation in sports is the primary goal for an individual's health, particularly for working women. According to **Mueck (1986, 189–206)**, health motivation may be a relatively effective motivator to begin (re)sports activity and engage in a group. However, it is insufficient to establish exercise as a stable behavioral norm." Sport provides the natural foundation for an independent, self-determined life by preparing the process of continual adaptation to changing life circumstances. As a result, motor activity might be considered a basis for quality of life.

The current study's problem can be summarized as follows: the working woman is in an important developmental stage in her life, and it can be considered one of the most important stages that may negatively or positively affect her personality and the way she deals with various life pressures, whether educational or family, as well as how to deal with professional pressures in the future. Sports can preserve and improve both subjective and objective health status, and subjective well-being is more significant to human life status than objective health, according to scientific evidence. Maintaining or enhancing one's health, particularly for working Iraqi women, improves one's quality of life, and health is the aim and of the biggest importance to all people. Similarly, disability affects physical safety and well-being, which alters one's self-perception and lowers Iraqi women workers' productivity at work, at home, and with their families.

Methodology:

The current research project is a bibliographic review that summarizes the key aspects of available knowledge on the issue of "The impact of recreational sports on the health of working Iraqi women". There is no specialized or extensive research in this area. This study aims to fill that gap and may be valuable to anyone who undertakes similar efforts in the future. The primary purpose of the bibliographic review is to incorporate the findings into the "body" of relevant literature. The current study review relates to explicitly defined topics and employs systematic and specific criteria for critical analysis of a published work, including summarizing, sorting, grouping, and comparing.

Review of literature

Physical activity's effects on human health

A state of whole physical, mental, and social well-being is now considered to be healthy, according to the World Health Organization. The diagnosis and treatment of many diseases have advanced significantly in recent decades because of innovative pharmaceutical and interventional therapies. Diseases still exist, though, and they place a heavy cost on the social and economic structures in addition to drastically lowering people's subjective quality of life. These illnesses include those that are becoming much more prevalent and whose causes are likewise linked to inactivity. Diseases of the heart and blood circulation, particularly diabetes, should be included in this context, along with diseases of the musculoskeletal system and problems of the metabolism of fat and carbohydrates. Mental and nervous function are also impacted. Physical abilities like awareness, focus, and observation deteriorate more quickly while one is immobile.

presently inactivity is acknowledged as a risk factor. According to health system estimates, inactivity is the second leading cause of death in the United States. Germany is probably going to have similar numbers. Two-thirds of Germans are

not physically active enough. As movement has recently received new significance in the field of lifestyle management, it is crucial to design and execute effective prevention measures based on movement. As a result, sports and physical activity take on increased importance. Regular physical activity has a huge potential to improve health. Presenting the significant physiological and health benefits of regular physical activity is the goal of this study. In the context of physical activity, one basically implies any skeletal muscle-driven movement that raises energy expenditure. Only when physical activity is organized, structured, intentional, and consistent can it have a good impact on one's health. With the "hyperacidity" of lactic acid salt eliminated, scientific studies have more clearly shown the benefits of endurance sports like cycling, running, and walking, etc. on aerobic metabolism. The proper, methodical deployment is crucial from a health standpoint (**Zarotis *et al.*, 2011**). According to certain research, moderate-intensity aerobic exercise enhances cardiorespiratory function and considerably lowers the overall risk of death in healthy children and adults of all ages and genders. However, as part of consistent, long-term training, physical or athletic practice was required.

Effects of Sports on the Cardiopulmonary System

Regular physical activity has a significant protective effect on the cardiovascular system and lung function. They are distinguished by a lower heart rate at rest and during physical activity, enhanced blood supply to the heart muscle, and

increased heart muscle oxygenation. In terms of vascular effects, arterial blood vessel flexibility increases, blood pressure drops, and blood flow in the outflow tract improves (**Zaroutis *et al.*, 2011**). The goal of a different study (**Abaza & Samalawi, 2019, 214**) was to create a recreational sports program for housewives between the ages of 50 and 45. The vital diversity and vital capacity of the respiratory system were improved, according to the results.

Sports' Effect on Metabolism

The metabolism of carbohydrates and lipids is also significantly impacted by physical activity. Endurance training promotes lipolysis, the enzymatic breakdown of neutral lipids into glycerol and free fatty acids, which is crucial for supplying energy as the load increases. While lipolysis reduces adipose tissue, it also has a beneficial effect on blood lipid levels (HDL). A favorable alteration in the bad cholesterol (LDL) particles that cause atherosclerosis and an increase in highly dense lipoproteins, particularly good cholesterol (HDL), are therefore also crucial. Insulin sensitivity rises as glucose is more effectively transported into skeletal muscle cells. The metabolic syndrome's aberrant cycle can be successfully interrupted in this way (**Zarotis *et al.*, 2011**).

Additionally, physical activity has a similarly significant impact on the metabolism of lipids and carbohydrates. It is crucial for supplying energy when the load increases because endurance training accelerates the enzymatic breakdown of neutral lipids into glycerol and free fatty acids, a process known as lipolysis. In addition to breaking down adipose tissue, lipolysis also has a favorable impact on blood lipid levels. Therefore, it's also critical that positive changes occur in the bad cholesterol (LDL) particles that cause atherosclerosis and that highly dense lipoproteins, particularly good cholesterol (HDL), rise. The efficiency of glucose transport into skeletal muscle cells improves along with insulin sensitivity. In this

manner, it is possible to successfully interrupt the aberrant metabolic syndrome cycle (**Zarotis *et al.*, 2011**). A prior study (**Abd- Jawad, 2020**) sought to create a suggested entertainment program; the outcomes showed a favorable impact and a high rate of improvement in blood cholesterol levels and physical fitness.

The Endocrine System

There is still more research to be done on the intricate impacts on the endocrine system. The regular hormonal cycle is undoubtedly impacted by physical exercise in several ways. Exercise has been demonstrated to activate the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis because it causes the adrenal cortex to secrete more cortisol. When physical exhaustion occurs, regular exercise also lowers the rise in stress chemicals like noradrenaline and adrenaline. According to several studies, this is also linked to an improvement in stress resistance, or a reduction in the release of stress hormones in reaction to mental stressors. Physical activity has an impact on insulin secretion, which is vital for health. As a result, active muscles use glucose more efficiently, requiring less insulin production from the pancreas. This can help to lower increased blood insulin levels associated with metabolic syndrome. The above–mentioned hormonal reactions play an important role in the benefits of physical activity. Regular physical activity boosts resilience to stressful psychosocial settings. Excessive physical activity, on the other hand, has been shown to drastically lower the secretion of male and female sex hormones.

The immune system

Regular, moderate exercise undoubtedly boosts the immune system, fortifies the body's defenses overall, and raises the body's susceptibility to viral and bacterial diseases. We believe that the anti–cancer effects of sports activity are caused, at least in part, by the overall activation of immunity. Furthermore, the so–called "open window" phenomena has real–world applications. It is typified by a marked

decline in immunological function just after strenuous exercise (**Zarotis et al., 2011**)

Psychology and Mental Processes

Frequent physical activity alters the central nervous system in intricate ways. Thus, it aids in selectively increasing blood flow to the brain. The areas of the brain near the forehead are especially positively impacted. It also helps the networks and connections of the central nervous system. This is particularly crucial for a child's brain development and boosts productivity at work, particularly for working women. Exercise produces endorphins, which, when combined with the brain's control of serotonin release, boost mood over time and, when combined with catecholamine suppression, make people more resilient to psychosocial stressors (**Zaroutis et al., 2011**). According to Nibras (**Nibras, 2024, 273–294**) engaging in sports activities for women between the ages of 35 and 45 is associated with increased experience, new learning opportunities, and activation of daily life. It also helps them prove themselves and boosts their self-confidence and motivation, all consistent with the idea of sports recreation. Since women are half of society, they are mothers and wives and have played a fundamental role in establishing society. They are one of the most important political pillars that must be protected, and they know the obstacles and problems that control them in a specific way. They must be committed to caring for their general safety, especially since they are the segments of society that need recreational programs to help them improve their condition and health. Through them, they can relieve pressure and feel happy.

Cardiovascular conditions

One of the main causes of death and morbidity in the globe is cardiovascular disease. Therefore, it is crucial to create efficient preventative methods despite remarkable therapeutic advancements. Numerous epidemiological studies in primary prevention have demonstrated that, even in the absence of additional risk factors, physical exercise and sports dramatically lower cardiovascular mortality and morbidity. **Gullu *et al.*** previously conducted a study on female employees at Inonu University who had no health problems and had a regular exercise routine and discovered that 45 minutes of running, walking, and aerobic exercise four days a week had a positive effect on women and were not associated with an increased risk of cardiovascular disease. Furthermore, it may be recommended that inactive people engage in sports activities for at least 30 minutes each day in their spare time to enhance physical fitness and lower cardiovascular disease risk factors (**Gullu *et al.*2013, 160–167**).

A study of female athletes discovered that women had a lower rate of sudden cardiac arrest or mortality than male athletes during their early competitive years (high school, college, and professional) as well as their professional years. Furthermore, female athletes had a lower risk of developing coronary heart disease and atrial fibrillation than men. According to longevity data, female athletes live longer than non-athletes (**Rao and Shah, 2022**).

The metabolic illness:

Hypertension, abnormalities in fat and sugar metabolism, and excessive weight are the hallmarks of the metabolic syndrome. Although each of the individual traits is a significant risk factor for the development of cardiovascular and other related disorders, taken together, they form a high-risk dynamic known as the risk package. The two main contributing factors to the development of metabolic syndrome are inadequate exercise and poor diet. Numerous studies have

unequivocally demonstrated that, while hereditary factors may contribute to the occurrence of metabolic syndrome, lifestyle variables—such as poor nutrition and inactivity—are the deciding factor. Sedentary lifestyles and physical inactivity are contributing factors to metabolic dysfunction, which can develop into a variety of cardiometabolic disorders. Hormonal imbalances brought on by a woman's transition to menopause may make these metabolic concerns worse. According to one study, postmenopausal women who engage in moderate–intensity training and cross–training experience significant improvements in their hypertension, dyslipidemia, dysglycemia, and abdominal obesity (**A. Tan, R.L. Thomas, M.D. Campbell *et al.* 2023, 337–351**).

Conclusion:

In conclusion, lack of exercise and physical inactivity can cause metabolic problems, heart and respiratory diseases, and other health problems. It can also have an impact on working women's mental health, which lowers their productivity at work, at home, and even in society. It can be claimed that women benefit from exercise since it helps them maintain a healthy lifestyle and improves their psychological state. Exercise helps to reduce blood fat levels and enhance various physical characteristics in women.

Recommendation:

Based on what we have reached, we recommend that women, whether working women or housewives, of different age groups, should exercise, and it is best to do so at a young age. It is critical to stress encouraging women to participate in sports and asking researchers to conduct more research on women in this field because it supports the goals of sustainability in the health of Iraqi women.

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