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Sathyannarayana K
Basketball Coach,
University College of Physical
Education, Bangalore University
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Vaidyanatha U
Research Scholar,
University College of Physical
Education Bangalore University
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Sport, fitness and health

Sathyannarayana K and Vaidyanatha U

Abstract

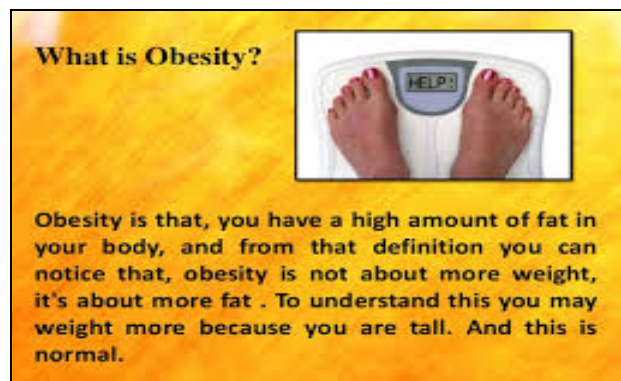
Sport and physical activity has long been used as a tool to improve mental, physical and social well-being. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor associated with a large number of lifestyle diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes and obesity. Sport projects that specifically focus on health outcomes generally emphasise There is a widespread consensus about the general links between physical activity and health. It is accepted that regular physical activity can contribute to a reduction in the incidence of the following:

Keywords: Sports, fitness, health, physical, mental

Introduction



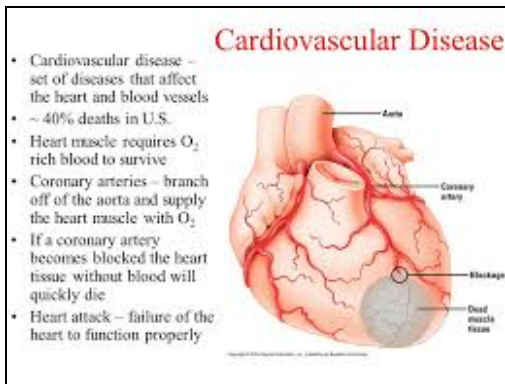
Obesity



Obesity is recognised as a medical condition and as a major contributor to a number of serious chronic illnesses – heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, stroke and cancer. Twenty-one per cent of the Indian adult population are regarded as obese; 22.1% of women, and 19.6% per cent of men. The last India Health Survey also indicated increasing levels of obesity among children. Among 2-15 year-olds, 9.8% of boys and 6.7% of girls were recorded as obese. Physical activity, in the context of broader lifestyle changes and healthy eating, can make a significant contribution to the control and reduction of obesity and associated health risks.

Correspondence
Sathyannarayana K
Basketball Coach,
University College of Physical
Education, Bangalore University
Bangalore, Karnataka, India

Cardiovascular Disease



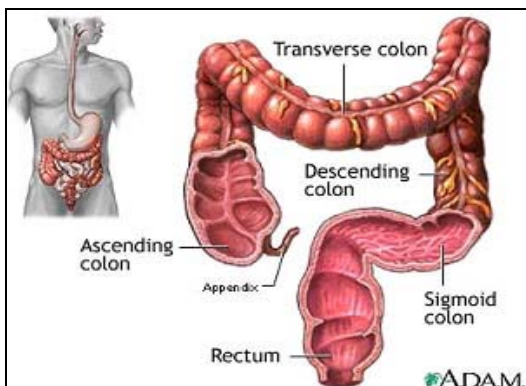
It is now well established that regular physical activity and increased cardio-respiratory fitness reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease mortality in general, and of coronary heart disease mortality in particular

Non-insulin Dependent Diabetes



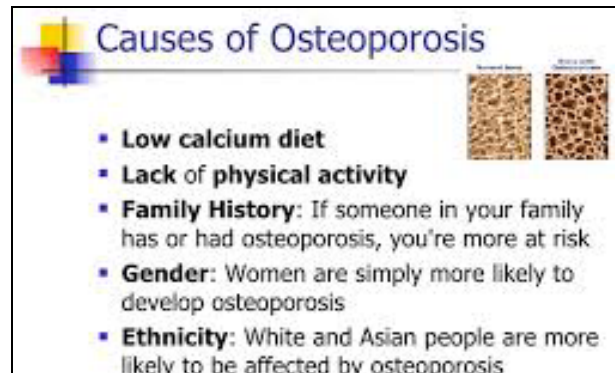
There is a strong link between type II diabetes and sedentary lifestyles. Physical activity would seem a prudent strategy for all people, especially those who are at risk of type II diabetes.

Colon Cancer



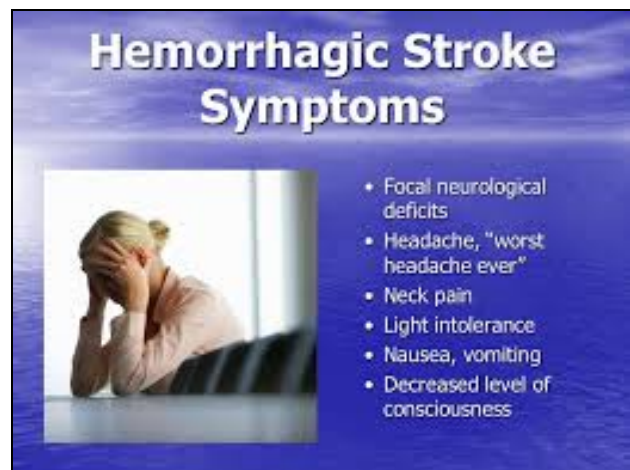
Evidence linking inactivity and a variety of cancers has grown over the last decade. The evidence for a positive relationship between regular physical activity and reduced risks of colon cancer is “convincing”, and for breast and prostate cancer “probable”

Osteoporosis



There is some evidence to suggest that load-bearing/resistance-based physical activity throughout childhood and early adolescence can contribute to the reduction in the incidence of osteoporosis.

Haemorrhagic Strokes



Although there are many factors that contribute to the incidence of strokes, evidence suggests that increased left ventricular mass without physical activity results in a high risk of stroke. In India, 6% of strokes have been assessed as attributable to obesity.

Further, low levels of physical activity are accompanied by widespread perceptions among the public that their fitness levels are better than their exercise levels suggest.

Consequently, the official recommendations are that:

- “Adults should accumulate (build up) at least 30 minutes of moderate activity on most days of the week.”
- “Children should accumulate (build up) at least one hour of moderate activity on most days of the week.”

Generally, ‘moderate activity’ is using about five to seven calories a minute – the equivalent of brisk walking. Sport specifically and physical activity more generally are not the sole answers to such widespread health issues – issues of

diet, lifestyle and poverty are central to many health issues. Nevertheless, there are clear health gains to be obtained by a general increase in regular participation in sport and other physical activity, especially among those who are most inactive and even starting to exercise in middle age will have a protective effect

Conclusion

Sport can offer physical activity opportunities for everyone because of its diversity, including such potentially 'lifelong activities' as cycling, swimming, aerobics, walking, tennis and badminton. The acknowledgement of this contribution and the centrality of physical activity to a healthy lifestyle is reflected in many partnerships with health agencies, especially GP referral schemes. Much of the research evidence relates to the health benefits of physical activity, rather than sport per se. Among the least active and least healthy groups, the promotion of an 'active lifestyle' may be a more useful strategy than the promotion of sport and 'fitness

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