



International Journal of Physical Education, Sports and Health

P-ISSN: 2394-1685
E-ISSN: 2394-1693
Impact Factor (RJIF): 5.38
IJPESH 2024; 11(2): 336-339
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<https://www.kheljournal.com>
Received: 13-01-2024
Accepted: 15-02-2024

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Mental health status of physical education teachers of Punjab

Amritpal Kaur

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate the mental health of physical education teachers of Punjab. A sample of 300 female physical education teachers of Punjab was drawn through purposive sampling technique. For the purpose of this study, the standardized Mental Health Check list developed by Pramod Kumar (1992) was used with the objective of analyzing the mental health status of the selected sample. This checklist consists of 11 items in which six mental signs and five somatic signs, presented in a four point rating format. A numerical value of 1, 2, 3 and 4 is assigned to the four response categories. The results showed that mental health signs (60%) respondents were reported to be healthy and (25%) were found to be moderately healthy. Whereas (15%) respondents' health status as ill. The results also showed that Somatic signs, (64%) respondents reported their health status as healthy. Whereas (23%) were found to be moderately healthy and (13%) were found to be ill. Glancing at the mental health overall status, (60%) of the teachers, were observed to be healthy by scoring more than 20. The fact raises an alarm to the psychologists, researchers and academicians to look into the issue and help the teachers to lead their lives successfully. However, (20%) of them is found to be moderately healthy and remaining (20%) were observed to be mentally ill.

Keywords: Mental health, well-being, physical education teachers

Introduction

Mental health is a positive concept related to the social and emotional wellbeing of individuals and communities. The concept is culturally defined, but generally relates to the enjoyment of life, ability to cope with stresses and sadness, the fulfilment of goals and potential, and a sense of connection to others (Jenkins, 2007) ^[7]. Mental health as an "ability to adjust satisfactorily to the various strains of the environment; we meet in life and mental hygiene as the means we take to assure this adjustment". Cutts and Mosaley (1978) ^[5].

The term 'Mental Health' consists of two words: The word 'mental' usually imply something more than purely cerebral functioning of a person. It includes one's emotional affective state. Similarly, 'health' refers to more than physical well-being. It also connotes the individual's intra-physic balance, the interaction of one's physic-structure with the external and social environment (Kaur, 2006) ^[8]. Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001). So, simple meaning of mental health is that it is good or proper functioning of mind. In previous stage, mental health is considered as free from mental illness. But mental illness is not a guarantee of good mental health. It is totally negative aspect of mental health. Positive mental health is a resource for individuals, families, communities and society (Barry, M. M. 2007) ^[1]. It is a level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness. It implies the ability to balance one's feelings, emotions, desires, and ambitions in one's daily living as well as the ability to face and accept the realities of life (Bhatia and Bhatia, 1990) ^[2].

Mental health is an index which shows the extent to which the person has been able to meet his environmental demands - social, emotional or physical. However, when he finds himself trapped in a situation he does not have matching coping strategies to deal with it effectively, he gets himself mentally strained. This mental strain is generally reflected in symptoms like anxiety, tension, restlessness or hopelessness among others. If it is felt for too long and too extensively by the person, these symptoms may take a different form or get syndromized, representing a mental illness.

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Mental health, therefore, should not be confused with mental illness; it is a study of pre-illness mental condition of the person (Kime, 2000) [9].

Health is more than just the absence of an illness, it means working toward our best possible state of emotional and physical well-being. Mental health and well-being is about thoughts, feelings and relationships. There are many related terms, such as social or emotional well-being, resilience, stress management or life skills. Mental health is a continuum, ranging from a state of optimal health, to having an illness which might affect our thoughts, feelings or behaviour. Most of us find ourselves somewhere in the middle of the continuum, just as we do for physical well being, but our state of health can change over time.

Mental health is defined by the (WHO) as “a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. In this positive sense, mental health is the foundation for individual well-being and the effective functioning of a community (WHO, 2010).

The term ‘Mental Health’ consists of two words: The word ‘mental’ usually imply something more than purely cerebral functioning of a person. It includes one’s emotional affective state. Similarly, ‘health’ refers to more than physical well-being. It also connotes the individual’s intra-physic balance, the interaction of one’s physic-structure with the external and social environment (Kaur, 2006) [8]. Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity (WHO, 2001). So, simple meaning of mental health is that it is good or proper functioning of mind. In previous stage, mental health is considered as free from mental illness. But mental illness is not a guarantee of good mental health. It is totally negative aspect of mental health. Positive mental health is a resource for individuals, families, communities and society (Barry, M. M. 2007) [1]. It is a level of psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness. It implies the ability to balance one’s feelings, emotions, desires, and ambitions in one’s daily living as well as the ability to face and accept the realities of life (Bhatia and Bhatia, 1990) [2].

Mental health is not just the absence of mental illness. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community (WHO, 2007). In other words, mental health is created in our interactions with the world around us, and is determined by our sense of control in dealing with our circumstances and by the support we have to help us cope (CMHA-NL, 2001) [4].

Mental health, given its polygenic nature and its imprecise borders, benefits from a historical perspective to be better understood. What today is broadly understood by “mental health” can have its origins tracked back to developments in public health, in clinical psychiatry and in other branches of knowledge. Although references to mental health as a state can be found in the English language well before the 20th century, technical references to mental health as a field or discipline are not found before 1946. During that year, the International Health Conference, held in New York, decided to establish the World Health Organisation (WHO) and a Mental Health Association founded in London. Before that date, found are references to the corresponding concept of “mental hygiene”, which first appeared in the English literature in 1843, in a book entitled mental hygiene or an

examination of the intellect and passions designed to illustrate their influence on health and duration of life. Moreover, in 1849, “healthy mental and physical development of the citizen” had already been included as the first objective of public health in a draft law submitted to the Berlin Society of Physicians and Surgeons. To help adolescence achieve their full potential both as youth and adult, it becomes essential to identify, treat and prevent mental disorders that interfere with their development. However getting rid of the disorders is not enough. It is important to instill positive values and behavior that enable them to flourish, contribute to society and be happy and healthy. While looking into the various causes influencing the mental health of adolescents, it is beyond doubt that various psycho - social factors contribute towards it. However, the psychosocial factors related to the personality of an individual become a marked potential feature, which have important role in mental health (Taylor, 2008) [10].

Mental health and wellness is the state at which one feels, thinks, and behaves. Mental health can be viewed on a continuum, starting with an individual who is mentally well and free of any impairment in his or her daily life, while someone else might have mild concerns and distress, and another might have a severe mental illness. Mental health is just as vital as physical health. In reality, the two coexist and should not be treated separately. There are many mental health disorders that exacerbate physical concerns or disorders, and vice versa.

Physical education is the sum of man’s physical activities elected as to kind and conducted as to outcomes (Freeman, 1964). While planning a physical activity programme, consideration must be given to two things. First, activities should be selected taking into account age, sex, and environments. Second, the outcome should be more than physical. Apart from health, fitness, and vigour, the mental and social aspects of human personality are also taken care of.

The aim of physical education is the development of physical, mental, emotional and socially fit citizens through the medium of physical activities that have been selected with a view to realizing these outcomes (Bucher, 1992) [3]. In a highly hectic and socially volatile lifestyle, the acquisition of a variety of skills is necessary in order to economize on one’s time, energy, and effort. Physical education makes people skillful, directly as well as indirectly. A ‘physically educated’ person can meet any event because he is fit, tough, courageous, and energetic. This apart, the skills learnt on the playground, when transferred to life situations, enable people to live economically, perform routines skillfully, and accomplish things successfully.

Methodology

The sample consisted of teachers that were teaching of physical education subject in schools. For the conduct of the present study, a sample of 300 female physical education teachers was selected through purposive sampling technique. The samples age ranged between 23-35 years. The standardized Mental Health Check list developed by Pramod Kumar (1992) was used with the objective of analyzing the mental health status of the selected samples. This checklist consists of 11 items in which six mental signs and five somatic signs, presented in a four point rating format. A numerical value of 1, 2, 3 and 4 is assigned to the four response categories. The total score varies from 11 to 44. For Mental Health A (i.e.) mental signs, the score range between 6-24 and for Mental Health B (i.e.) somatic signs the score range between 5-20 showing the highest to the lowest mental

health status of the person. The adopted scoring pattern for both A and B separately is as follows:-

- A score of less than or equal to 10 indicates good mental health.
- A score of ranging from 11-13 indicates moderate mental health.
- A score more than 14 poor indicates poor mental health.

Results and Discussion

Mental health habits including coping, resilience and good judgment help teachers to achieve overall well-being and set the stage for positive mental health in school. Enhancing social skills, problem-solving skills and self-confidence can help prevent mental health problems such as conduct disorders, anxiety, depression and eating disorders as well as

other risk behaviours including those that relate to sexual behaviour, substance abuse, and violent behaviour (Werner, 1995)^[11].

Table 1: Mental health status of the selected sample

Signs	Category	Score	N(300)	%
Mental signs	Healthy	< 10	180	60
	Moderately healthy	11-13	75	25
	Ill	>14	45	15
Somatic signs	Healthy	< 10	192	64
	Moderately healthy	11-13	69	23
	Ill	>14	39	13
Total	Healthy	<20	180	60
	Moderately healthy	21-27	60	20
	Ill	>28	60	20

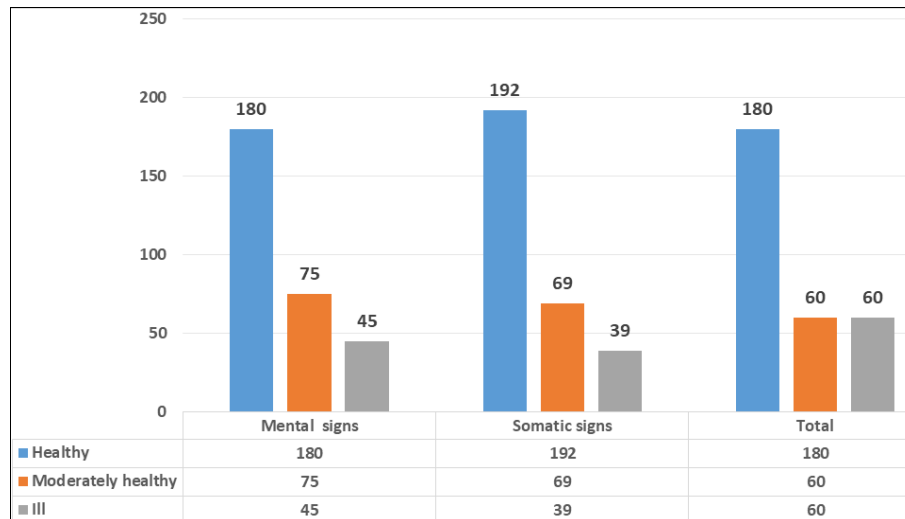


Fig 1: Categorizing the selected sample based on the mental health score

Table I and Fig. 1. Indicates the manifestation of mental health signs more than half of the respondents (60%) reported their health status as healthy. Whereas (25%) were found to be moderately healthy and (15%) were found to be ill.

With regards to the manifestation of somatic signs more than half of the respondents (64%) reported their health status as healthy. Whereas (23%) were found to be moderately healthy and (13%) were found to be ill.

Glancing at the mental health overall status, (60%) of the teachers, were observed to be healthy by scoring more than 20. The fact raises an alarm to the psychologists, researchers and academicians to look into the issue and help the teachers to lead their lives successfully. However, (20%) of them is found to be moderately healthy and remaining (20%) were observed to be mentally ill.

Conclusion

A commonly used definition of mental health is “a state of well-being in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community”. Mental health or psychological well-being makes up an integral part of an individual’s capacity to lead a fulfilling life, including the ability to form and maintain relationships, to study, work or pursue leisure interests, and to make day-to-day decisions about educational, employment, housing or other choices.

Poor mental health can have important effect on the wider health and development of teachers and is associated with several health and social outcomes. The role of personality factors is

important in determining the mental health. Studies have adopted different methods to understand the effects of personality factors in the progress of mental health and well-being of teachers. So the current study aimed to understand teacher’s state of mental health, and realize how the personality factors namely ambitious and optimistic nature influence their mental health.

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