An investigation into the relationship between physical activity and happiness in adults.

by Anne Turner

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my dad, Jack Turner, 1928 – 2007.

Student Declaration

This work is original and has not been submitted previously in support of a degree qualification or other course.

Signed……Anne Turner……

Date……17/10/2008……

Abstract.

An investigation into the relationship between physical activity levels and happiness in adults.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate if there was a relationship between daily physical activity levels and self reported happiness. The design of the study was cross-sectional. Fifty-one university employees, comprising of twenty-eight males and twenty three females (mean age = 47 years) each completed a three-day physical activity diary and a self administered happiness questionnaire. 67% of the employees were academic and the remainder were administration or technical staff. Correlation analyses were used to assess the relationship between happiness and activity levels in total, occupational and leisure-time activity. The results of the study show the null hypotheses to be correct, as there was no significant relationship between total activity levels and happiness. ($p > 0.05$). Results also identified that there was no significant relationship between happiness and occupational or leisure-time activity. Happiness scores were associated with gender, and females were found to have a significantly happier than males ($p=0.001$), although the reason for this was not identified in this study. Participants with low activity levels were found to have a lower mean happiness score than more active participants but his was not statistically significant. Forty-four participants (86%) were found to meet current government guidelines for recommended levels of daily activity.

The study concluded that higher levels of activity were not directly associated with increase happiness. It also supports previous research identifying happiness as a multidimensional concept dependant on many social and environmental factors.

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i. Glossary

Body Mass Index (BMI)	Weight in kilograms divided by height in metres squared: kg/m^2
Exercise	Exercise includes bouts of physical activity which is volitional, planned, structured, and repetitive. It is aimed at improvement or maintenance of any aspect of fitness or health and therefore forms only part of the overall measurement of physical activity. (Caspersen, Powell and Christenson.1985)
Fitness	A set of attributes that people have or achieve which relates to the ability to perform physical activity, and maybe used to determine general health or physical performance. (Caspersen, Powell and Christenson, 1985)
MET	Metabolic equivalent, 1 MET equals a person's metabolic rate of energy expenditure when at rest.
Physical Activity	Any force exerted by skeletal muscle that result in energy expenditure above resting level. This includes all human movement including work and leisure time activity, walking, transportation, exercise and sport. (Caspersen, Powell and Christenson 1985).

ii) List of Abbreviations

Abbreviation given in text	Full title
ACSM	American College of Sports Medicine
BHF	British Heart Foundation
BMI	Body Mass Index
CDCP	Center for Disease Control and Prevention (USA)
cm	Centimetres
CVD	Cardio Vascular Disease
DH	Department of Health (UK)
GHQ	General Health Questionnaire
HDA	Health Development Agency
HSE	Health And Safety Executive (UK)
IC	Information Centre
IOM	Institute Of Medicine (USA)
kg	kilogram
kcals	kilocalories
LEAP	Local Exercise Action Plans
MIND	National Association for Mental Health (UK)
NHS	National Health Service
NICE	National Institute of Clinical Excellence
OA	Occupational Activity
OHQ	Oxford Happiness Questionnaire
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PADs	Physical Activity Diaries
POMS	Profile of Mood States
POST	Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (UK)
Std Dev	Standard Deviation
SWA	Sensewear Armband
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
WHO	World Health Organisation
yrs	years

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