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Physical exercise as a key health determinant among patients

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PHYSICAL EXERCISE AS A KEY HEALTH DETERMINANT AMONG PATIENTS

Waris Qidwai, Danish Saleheen,* Sadia Saleem,* Marie Andradas and Syed Iqbal Azam

Physical exercise is among the key determinants of health. The role of physical exercise in health promotion was well known to the ancient Chinese. Even moderate activity such as daily brisk walking for 30 to 60 minutes, is associated with significant reductions in the incidence and mortality of cardiovascular disease. Benefits of increased physical activity have been shown among patients with hypertension, diabetes mellitus, and dyslipidemia. Therefore, a need was identified to study the perceptions and practice concerning physical exercise among patients in Karachi, Pakistan.

A questionnaire based cross-sectional survey was conducted at the Family Practice Center, The Aga Khan University Hospital, Karachi, from March to July 2002. A total of 393 patients were surveyed. The majority were young married men who were well educated and in private or government service. Table 1 summarizes the findings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical exercise considered mandatory for good health?</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The study population comprised mostly well-educated men, with well-off socioeconomic status. Since patients from all walks of life and strata of the society are seen at the Family Practice Clinic, we believe to have a study sample more representative of the overall population. Nonetheless, a study conducted in the suburban community settings would be useful.

The benefits of physical exercise are well known and scientifically proven. The overall benefit of physical exercise even in the elderly stands proven, despite sudden death on rare occasions. It is for these reasons that regular physical exercise is apart of the life style of people in the developed world.

A significant proportion of the respondents (53%), do not exercise on a regular basis. Among those who exercised, as high as 25%, did it less than once-a-week. This is certainly not associated with positive health outcomes. A significant proportion (35%) exercised for less than 30 minutes, which again may not be associated with positive health outcomes.

Brisk walking, light body exercise and jogging were listed as the common types of physical exercise undertaken by the respondents. There is certainly a need to develop avenues where such activities could be undertaken.

A high prevalence of diabetes mellitus, stroke, hypertension and dyslipidemia exist among the Pakistani population. Strategies that prevent the development of these medical conditions are needed on an urgent basis.

Life style behavior can be influenced and modified with beneficial effects on health. Increased physical activity program among children in Pakistan have successfully reduced serum cholesterol levels.

It has been shown that knowledge about health as well as awareness and understanding about physical activity help in modifying patient behavior for better health outcomes.

Almost all the respondents (97%) considered physical exercise to be mandatory, yet only 47% were exercising on a regular basis. The excuse of not having time depicts the low priority given to physical activity even by the educated persons. It was generally believed that offering namaz (prayers) regularly and doing household work among the housewives is enough physical exercise.

The issue of not having enough facilities is genuine, and women in our society particularly feel vulnerable in exercising outdoor. However, there are not enough open grounds where people could play sports let alone the gymnasium and swimming pools facilities. The practice of physical exercise should be promoted so that disease prevention rather than cure may be achieved.

REFERENCES.


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**ERRATA**

(a) Due to a computer error the conclusion text of an article was wrongly inserted in a case report entitled "Chylothorax in a case of non-hodgkin’s lymphoma" by Asif Naseer and Waseem Saeed, published in JCPSP 2003, Vol 13(2): 108-110

The correct text is reproduced and may be read as:

**Conclusion:**

In our setup relatively asymptomatic cases of pleural effusion and ascites are common due to chronic liver disease or tuberculosis, a thorough examination and investigations are deemed essential for all such cases to accomplish the final diagnosis.

(b) In the article entitled "Management of periculair postburn scarring in the Epileptics" by Alyscia M. Cheema, Mahmood Saeed, Abdul Ghani and Syed Wasim Akhter, published in JCPSP 2003, Vol 13(4): 210-212, the workplace/departments of authors were inadvertently omitted.

Their correct names and departments are reproduced and may be read as:

1. Alyscia M. Cheema, Department of Ophthalmology, JPMC, Karachi
2. Mahmood Saeed, Department of Ophthalmology, JPMC, Karachi
3. Abdul Ghani, Department of Psychiatry, JPMC, Karachi
4. Syed Wasim Akhter, Department of Neurology, JPMC, Karachi

These errors are regretted. 

Editor

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**ABSTRACT**

Concerning Patients

Patients of the cultural and universal organ transplant brain death were all at times.

In 1564, Vermeer in Madrid did autopsy was undertaken and when they were at times.

The fear of patients, in the laboratories, when they became evidence of death.2 The recoveries were always a matter in a laboratory brain stem death. Any patient who can be declared looking worse, ECG are factors. It really their dear one's failure ultimate one. Two to ten days woman's health...

Correspondence

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1 Department of A
2 Department of 

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**KEY WORDS**

Doubts about the past and present positionning people's some reason and that were at times.

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