

Male Adolescents Sports Activities

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Abstract: A descriptive study of a 242 male adolescents was undertaken using survey results to investigate the number and kind of sport activities, and number of hour's sedentary activities. Adolescents spent an average of 21.10 ± 4.23 h/wk engaged in sedentary activities, 95% of them participate in sports activities. They reported that 78.2% participated in their sport activities in public areas, 13.6% at home while a few respondents reported to participate in their sport activities at clubs (5.4%). The study recommends organizing various sport programmes after school hours so as to take maximum advantage of schools facilities and a concerted effort should be made by all parents, teachers, school administrators and the community to improve the general physical fitness of students on the whole.

Key words: Omani sports, physical activity, sedentary activities, sport activities

INTRODUCTION

Measuring physical activity level of individuals provides vital data that determines the degree of physical inactivity at the societal and individual levels. Observing and following-up individuals' physical activity regularly helps to recognize their physical fitness level. This helps to detect physical inactivity early, and thus can start to modify individuals' behaviour to create more active lifestyles (Macera and Pratt, 2000). It also allows specialists to evaluate the efficiency of programmes directed at increasing physical activity rates of the individual. The WHO realized the risk of physical inactivity on health. It recommended periodically observing the physical activity level of different social groups to weed out the phenomenon of physical inactivity (WHO, 1999).

Macera and Prate (2000) outlined the following observation targets of physical activity from a public health perspective:

- Evaluate the physical activity policies and programmes at the individual level.
- Evaluate the level of physical activity and physical fitness of inactive individuals.
- Follow-up on the physical activity or the physical inactivity phenomena in the region or country.
- Early intervention to limit physical inactivity in society.
- Develop interventions of physical activity according to the demographic characteristics of the target area(s).

Measuring physical activity is specifically important for all age groups such as adolescence and early

adulthood (Thompson *et al.*, 2003). Results (Corbin, 2001; Thompson *et al.*, 2003) have shown that a tangible decrease in physical activity happens after the age of 12 and continues to decrease until the age of 18-19 years. According to Rowland (1998), this decrease in physical activity from childhood to adolescence is due to external and internal factors. Through early childhood, daily energy expenditure occurs as a response to (internal) biological rather than external factors. But as the child grows biological motivation starts to decline. At the same time, some of the external factors unfortunately have a negative influence on physical activity, which makes them inactive (Rowland, 1998). External factors include the availability of equipment, sport facilities, family environment, friends and social support to exercise, trends towards physical activity, and the desire to compete in sports competitions (Rowland, 1998; Sallis *et al.*, 2000).

In 1997, a CDC report stressed that physical activity levels in children and youths should be measured. It also stated the education and awareness of physical health should be provided by trained personal, who should emphasise the importance of physical activity for school children and improve physical education programmes. This knowledge covers the positive trends and behavioural skills that may prompt individuals to shift to a more active lifestyle (CDC, 1997).

Figure 1 offers a graphic summary of an estimation of the expected decrease in the level of physical activity in individuals as they grow older.

The decline in physical activity starts from the age of 12 and may continue with age. It portrays the decrease of physical activity in males and females (Corbin, 2001). There is a sharp decrease in physical activity from adolescence till the early years of the maturity stage. This decrease continues constantly with age. Therefore, early

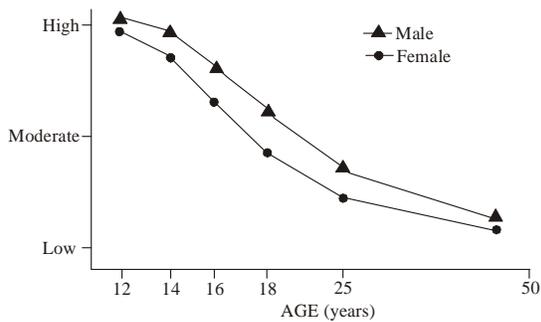


Fig. 1: The expected decrease in physical activity according to age, (Corbin, 2001)

intervention to increase physical activity during childhood and adolescence will definitely reduce the degree of physical inactivity in individuals, not only in childhood but also in adulthood. This would be beneficial to individuals and the community. However, the purpose of this study was to investigate the number and kind of sport activities, and number of hours in sedentary activities of a representative sample of Omani male adolescents.

METHODS

A descriptive study of Omani male adolescents was undertaken using survey results. Its items had been taken from different physical activity questionnaires (GSHS, 2005; Stel *et al.*, 2004) and additional items were generated to address the specific variables of the study.

Physical activities are divided into sports activities and work activities. In the sports activities, the students answered if they participated in sports activities or not, and in which sports activities they participated in during the week, the days of participation, and the kinds of sports activities, the places where they participated in these activities and the time spent on these sports activities. The second group included work activities, and the students responded if they were involved in work activities during the week. The work activity included the days of participation, the kinds of work activities, the time spent on them on weekdays and weekends. Also, the number of work activities was calculated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The average age of the study sample was sixteen years with a standard deviation of 0.31. It found that the students had an average weight of 54.01 ± 8.06 kg. The maximum weight reported was 87.6 kg while the minimum weight was 33.2 kg. This average is lower than the weight of American adolescents (75 kg) (2004), Flemish adolescents (67 kg) (2003) and with the previous

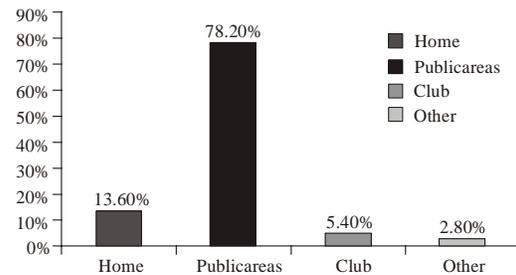


Fig. 2: Place of participation on sport activities

research of Al-Shamli (2010), which found that that 16- to 17-year-old boys have an average (55 ± 0.49 kg) of weight, but higher than Taiwanese adolescents (52.1 ± 11.6 kg) (2002). The average height of the sample was 167.18 ± 6.54 cm, which was also shorter than American adolescents (175.3 cm) (2004) and Flemish adolescents (178.1 cm) (2003) but taller than Taiwanese adolescents (160.8 ± 7.4 cm) (2002). Omani students in this study reported spending an average of 21.10 ± 4.23 h/wk engaged in sedentary activities such as watching television, playing computer games, and surfing the Internet. These findings are consistent with the previous research of Al-Barwani *et al.* (2001) which found that 15- to 16-year-old boys and girls in Oman spent 16.4 h/wk in sedentary activities, and Vilhjalmsson and Thorlindsson (1998) which found that 15-16 year old boys and girls in Iceland spent 3.7 h/day doing sedentary activities. In contrast, Ekelund *et al.* (2001) reported much higher sedentary activity results (mean = 9.3 h daily) among 14- to 15-year-old Swedish boys and girls. In our study, urban students reported spending more time on sedentary activities compared with rural youth (24.15 and 18.05 h/wk, respectively). These figures are consistent with data from Loucaides *et al.* (2004) who found that urban students spent more time in sedentary activities than did their rural counterparts (2.9 and 2.5 h/d, respectively). Ozdirenc *et al.* (2005) also reported that urban students spent more time in sedentary activities than did rural students (13.4 and 10.9 h/wk, respectively). However, Sjolie and Thuen (2002) found no difference between rural and urban students on the time spent on sedentary activities (24.2 and 23.7 h/wk, respectively).

As an overall sample 11% percent of respondents reported not to participate in sports activities and as can be seen from Fig. 2, most who reported that they participated in their sport activities in public areas (78.2%). The second place of sports participation was reported to be at home (13.6%). While a few respondents reported to participate in their sport activities at clubs (5.4%).

The majority of respondents reported to participate in football after school hours, and almost all of the

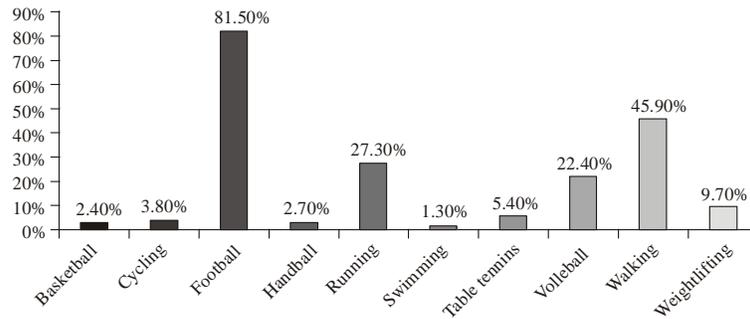


Fig. 3: Kind of sports activities adolescents participate on for overall sample

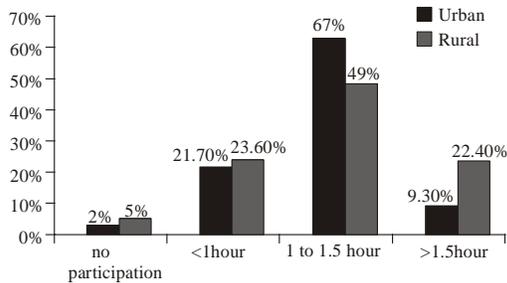


Fig. 4: Time spent on sport activities between rural and urban areas

respondents did not participate in other sports such as table tennis, handball or swimming after school hours, which shows in Fig. 3.

This is evident from the results which show that 95% of students in rural areas and 98% of students in urban areas participate in sports (Fig. 4). Interestingly, most respondents in both areas (rural = 49%, urban = 67%) spend between one to one and half hours a day and a few students spend less than one hour. The majority of them (89 and 83%, respectively) participate in their sports activities at public areas while others from both urban and rural areas participate at home.

There are also a few who joins clubs and participate in sports activities at these clubs. Most students play football and a few participate in other games (Fig. 5). Most students in rural areas prefer walking compared to those who are from urban areas.

Furthermore, most students from both rural and urban areas reported to participate in volleyball, handball and table tennis after school hours. Also, regardless of areas, the majority of them participate in football. However, most of them from both areas did not participate in walking, cycling, running, weightlifting, basketball and swimming.

The findings of this study correspond to the study by Ozdirenc *et al.* (2005) which showed that rural students

spend more time in sport activities than urban ones (69.4 and 65%, respectively). Vilhjalmsson and Thorlindsson (1998) showed that 17% of students never participated in sports or physical exercise after school hours, whereas 60% participated once a week or more and 36% 3 times a week or more. Of those who participated at all (less than once a week to daily), 41% were involved in club sports and 73% in non-club teams or individual sports and exercises. Their results do not support the proposition that individuals involved in non-physical activities are also more physically active. Also it is consistent with the argument that those who engage in non-physical activities are sometimes forced to reduce or discontinue their physical activity because of time constraints. That happens to students in rural areas where they sometimes have to do work activities to help their families. This finds support in the findings of Sjolie and Thuen (2002) who found that 22% of rural and 36% of urban students participate in sports activities for three times/week. Also they showed that 13% of rural and 35% of urban preferred walking, 11% of rural and 14% of urban preferred running, and 11% of urban participate which is different from the findings this study. However the study by Joanne *et al.* (1997) supports the findings of this study in that that the majority of their sample played football 32, 31% bicycling and 26% played basketball.

The study found that more urban students participate in their sports activities at clubs and in public areas, whereas all of the rural students participate in public areas as there are no clubs to attend in the rural areas. The clubs that do exist are in the centre of the cities and so not accessible for the people who live on the outskirts of these areas. In rural areas a club does not exist, but there is a school with facilities, however in similarity with other areas, even though there are schools close to large population areas they are not used by people. The study found that school sports facilities are not utilized after school hours. Thus, highlighting the fact that these facilities are not used effectively. Therefore, the study recommends organizing various sport programmes after

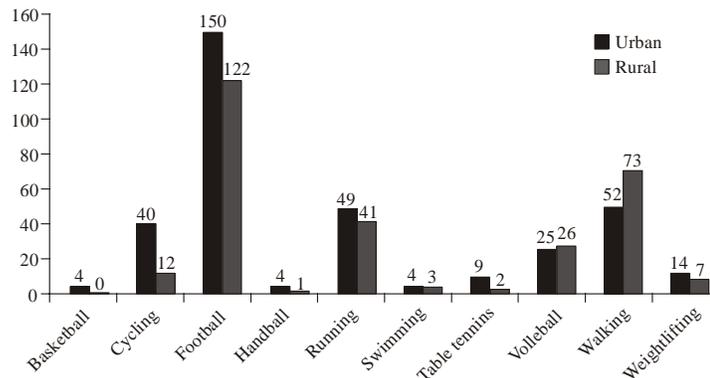


Fig. 5: Kind of sports activities urban and rural adolescents participate

school hours so as to take maximum advantage of schools facilities. These programmes should be under the supervision of specialized programmers, who can contribute to raising the level of physical fitness for participants. Furthermore, current study highlighted the types of sports activities that are participated in outside school hours. It identified that there were some sport activities which were more common than others. Therefore the Ministry of Sport Affairs may focus on developing more sport programmes to encourage participation in a greater variety of sport activities.

Currently the Ministry of Sport Affairs implements an annual sports programme during the summer period, from June to August which includes a variety of sports, traditional games and entertainment. It is held at sport complexes that are located in the centre of the regions. Therefore, towns that are not close to the complex can not benefit from these programmes. Thus, this study also recommends that the Ministry of Sports Affairs cooperates with the Ministry of Education in order to utilize school facilities that are available to host some of these events. It also recommends that these programmes could be extended throughout the year. Also a concerted effort be made by all parents, teachers, school administrators and the community to improve the general physical fitness of students on the whole. For example, parents should encourage their children to participate in physical activities, and school administrators and physical education teachers should stress the health benefits of participation in physical activities.

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