

Importance of Physical Activity in Children's Mental Health

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Abstract

Introduction: Mental health is an important component of children's health that affects almost every aspect of their lives. One in five children in the world experiences varying degrees of mental health disorders and the burden of morbidity and mortality from these causes is increasing. For these reasons, the mental health status of children poses a serious concern for health and the health system in general. **The purpose of this paper** review is to analyze literature of mental health as an important part of a child's overall health. In fact it has a significant impact on physical health as well as on children's ability to be successful in school, work and society. Mental health as well as physical health affects the way an individual thinks, feels and acts. **Methodology:** In order to fulfill this review are using methods of literature analysis, and is made combination and comparison of data from various works of authors varied. To successfully realize this review paper we studied and analyzed the contemporary scientific literature. The methods used are: literature analysis, physical activity mental health and recommendations. **Recommendations:** all the literature used can be clearly seen the importance of understanding mental health support is essential for addressing the phenomenon and its associated consequences, including, appropriate parental communication, mental health promotion, physical activity as well as specialized psychologist assistance and medical assistance.

Keywords: physical activity, mental health, stress, methodology, emotion, children.

Introduction

Staying active is just as important for the brain, but it is also for the body. Mind and body are very much related to each other. When you improve your physical health, you automatically experience a higher mental and emotional well-being. Physical activity also releases endorphins, powerful chemicals that boost mood and provide added energy. Exercise or daily activity can have a major impact on mental or emotional health problems, relieve stress, improve memory, and help you sleep more comfortably (*Howard T., 2005*).

Unfortunately, it is impossible to avoid most of the consequences of engaging in physical activity. But how severe they will be depends only on the child. If your child is in good health, is able to endure intense sports training, this does not mean that he will be safe from injuries and nerve irritations. Therefore, one should hope for qualified medical care, which will help more effectively to cope with the consequences of physical activity (*Felipe B & Brendon S., 2017*).

Mental health is an important part of a child's overall health. In fact it has a significant impact on physical health as well as on children's ability to be successful in school, work and society (*Kessler et al., 2007*). Mental health as well as physical health affects the way an individual thinks, feels and acts (*Emerson & Hatton, 2007*).

Specialists have determined that worldwide, one in five children suffers from mental health problems. Unfortunately, it is thought that this figure will increase. The World Health Organization estimates that in 2025, children's mental health problems will be 50% higher compared to all health related problems. Thus mental health problems will be one of the top five causes causing illness, disability and death.

And while it is not yet completely clear why this number is growing so fast, many experts think it is related to stress in children and families, as well as a better diagnosis of these problems. This causes the child to have problems being able to fulfill his / her po-

tential, including consequences on health, education, work or the justice system (*W.H.O., 2013*).

However, despite the uncertainties regarding cause-effect data, it can be argued that mental health problems can cause problems such as: substance abuse, school problems, involvement in criminal activities, and suicide. Likewise, less than half of the identified cases receive treatment, but only 20% of them receive proper treatment for this problem. All children have the right to be happy, and they deserve access to effective care to prevent or treat any mental health problems they may have. In the world today, there are many children living in poverty or underdeveloped countries who cannot meet these needs.

Specialists are working to change this situation. Thus, more and more attention is being paid to the mental health problems of children, as well as the capacities of the health system in general to deal with this epidemic. Here it is very important to have action plans to determine the causes of this epidemic, but also for children to receive the right services. For example, an overweight boy who is prejudiced because of his weight may withdraw from society and may develop depressive symptoms, or may be shy about playing with other children, which contributes even more to his health problems physical and as a result also in his mental health (*Kryazheva M L., 1996*).

Types of mental health problems in children and risk factors

There are several forms of mental health problems that commonly affect children:

Mood disorders and especially depression are affecting more and more children, compared to long ago. There are more cases of depression in adolescence than in childhood. Specialists explain this with the identity crisis, which can lead to hopelessness, motivation, feeling misunderstood, etc.

Self-harm is a common mental health problem in children. Some people find it difficult to manage intense emotions and can

manage to hurt themselves. This mostly testifies to the refusal to take on responsibilities (*Mental Health Foundation & Camelot Foundation, 2006*).

Anxiety disorders many children who may change certain aspects of life such as school, society, etc., may exhibit elements of this disorder

Post-traumatic stress disorder most often in children can appear as a result of involvement in an accident, serious event, sexual or physical abuse, etc.

Hyperactivity disorder is a disorder that occurs in children who have it through impulsive behaviors, difficulty concentrating, etc.

Eating disorders usually begin in late childhood or early adolescence. They are most often caused by weight problems, but also by a distortion of self-image (*British Medical Association, 2007*).

Meanwhile, there are several risk factors that increase the likelihood of children experiencing mental health problems (*N.I.C.E., 2011*). Some of these factors include:

- Having an illness for a long time.
- Having a parent or family member with mental health problems, problems with alcohol or the law.
- Experiencing the loss of a close person.
- Having separated or divorced parents.
- Being a victim of bullying or physical or sexual abuse.
- Living in poverty and lack of a home.
- Experiencing discrimination, perhaps because of race, sexual orientation or religion.
- Caring for a relative or taking on responsibilities as an adult.
- Having constant difficulties in education.

Consequences of low physical activity in children

Movement, physical activity and sports are an important part of a child's full and harmonious development. Taking care of the health of the son or daughter takes up most of the time of the parents. And the opportunity to do physical activity is a great way,

give the child a load that is vital to the body. At this age, he himself shows an increased interest in sports sections, especially for the types of sports games: football, volleyball, etc. In the early years you need to instill in the child a love for sports and explain the role of a healthy lifestyle (*Ferreira I et al., 2019*). For above, the consequences of low physical activity are:

- Has an effect on the work of the cardiovascular and respiratory systems. If there is little movement, then breathing slows down and becomes shallow. This leads to a decrease in metabolism.
- Lack of movement leads to stagnation of blood in the legs, which reduces the performance of the whole organism and above all, the brain. The child becomes distracted, his memory weakens and the time to find the right solution is increased.
- The body of children who do not move enough, lowers immunity.
- Spine problems. Children who sit are characterized by weak muscles. Therefore, they can't keep the body sitting for a long time, as scoliosis forms.

There is a pattern that shows that, the more the child develops the ability to control his body, the faster and better he acquires theoretical knowledge and the more symmetrical, more varied and more accurate the movements, the more in both hemispheres of the brain develop equally. Children's games is a beneficial physical activity for your child and will have a huge positive impact on your child. Muscle tissue, bones will be strengthened. Exercise will help develop different muscle groups, providing a complex load for the whole body. The body will be in great shape (*Fox KR., 1999*).

The impact of physical activity on a child's development is definitely positive. In addition to any special effect on children's body, sports games teach racing behavior. How to behave when you win and how when you lose. It promotes the ability to accept defeat, respect for other people's victories, and the ability to compliment the most successful rivals (*Tammelin T et al., 2003*).

Thanks to physical activity, children develop:

- Analytical skills. They are facilitated by the ability to analyze the situation that occurs during the game.
- Sociability develops for the fact that the child falls into a group and he has to learn how to act in a team.
- Obedience to rules develops willpower, perseverance and self-control.
- Sports games provide an opportunity to develop a sense of empathy in children.

Thanks to the correct pedagogical influence, the child's health is strengthened, the physiological functions of the body are trained, movements, motor skills and physical qualities necessary for his all-round harmonious development are intensively developed (*Kraskow E., 2010*).

How parents can help

If children have a warm and open relationship with their parents, they are more likely to discuss their problems with them. One of the most effective ways parents can help their children is by listening and taking their feelings seriously. Children may need a hug, may need support to do something, or may want practical help.

Usually negative feelings of children pass. Parents need to understand that it is necessary to intervene if the child continues to be stressed for a long time, if negative feelings continue to prevent them from living their lives, if these negative feelings are damaging their family life, or if the child is behaving in an age inappropriate way.

Where can we go for a specialized child psychologist?

A child psychologist can be found at:

- School.
- Community center of mental health.
- In hospitals where they cooperate with pediatricians and psychiatrists.
- In private clinics.

Promoting mental health in children

Psychologists working with children and young people are also trained to consider aspects of emotional development, social identity, cognitive and biological (*Gulliver & Griffiths KM & Christensen H., 2010*). Culture, ethnicity and language also have a significant impact on children's behavior, thus influencing methods of preventing and treating mental health disorders. Psychologists have developed several tools for assessing protective and risk factors for mental health in children, so that they can be tested for emotional problems, as well as for continuous monitoring of treatment progress (*Pappas & Frize, 2010*).

A child is likely to have good mental health when:

- Feels that others love, trust and appreciate him.
- He is interested in various aspects of life and has hope and optimism.
- Able to learn and take responsibility.
- Has a sense of belonging in the family and society.
- Accepts yourself, as well as the positive aspects of yourself.
- Feels that he has control in his life.
- Has the strength to face negative aspects of life, as well as the ability to solve problems.

Aspects that would help children to have good mental health include:

- Good physical health, eating in a balanced way, involvement in regular physical activity.
- Having time and freedom to play indoors and outdoors.
- Being part of a family where members have effective communication between them.
- Being in a school that cares about the well-being of students.
- Participation in various activities adapted to age (*Green et al., 2005*).

Research in psychology has contributed to the development of a more effective treatment and prevention of mental health disorders in children, young people and their families. This includes

programs that target children in school contexts, in transition, in adulthood, expectant mothers, etc. (*National Association of Special Schools, 2013*).

Programs have been designed that effectively involve families, schools and the community, which is a very important social support for the long-term well-being of children. It is intended that these programs be at the level:

- Individual- counseling therapy for those with mental health disorders.
- Peer-supported programs which aim to improve social skills, communication, etc.
- Family- parental education based on the emotional needs of children at each stage of development.
- Community- violence prevention programs offered in various community centers.
- Systems- reference the coordination of health services in the systems of child protection, education, justice, etc.

Purpose of the paper

Review is to analyze literature of mental health as an important part of a child's overall health. In fact it has a significant impact on physical health as well as on children's ability to be successful in school, work and society. Mental health as well as physical health affects the way an individual thinks, feels and acts.

Methodology

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Recommendations

The research in this paper brings the following recommendations:

- Sports activities are a great benefit for the physical and psychological development of the child. However, if the load is abused, they can provoke illness and serious injury.
- Aim for 30 minutes of activity on most days. If it is easier, three 10-minute sessions can be just as effective. Start right now by going for a walk or dancing to your favorite song.
- Plan regularly to perform three rhythmic exercises during the day that include arms and legs, such as: walking, running, swimming, weight training, martial arts, or dancing.
- Add an element of mindfulness to your exercises. Instead of focusing on your thoughts, focus on how your body feels when you move.

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