



## RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# IMPACT OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ON MENTAL HEALTH AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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### Abstract

Physical activity plays a crucial role in maintaining both physical and mental well-being. In recent years, mental health concerns among young adults have increased significantly due to academic pressure, social challenges, sedentary lifestyles, and excessive digital engagement. This paper examines the relationship between physical activity and mental health among young adults. Drawing upon existing literature, the study highlights how regular exercise contributes to reduced symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress while improving self-esteem, cognitive performance, and overall quality of life. The findings suggest that promoting physical activity should be considered an important public health strategy for improving mental health outcomes among young adults.

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### Introduction:-

Mental health has become a major public health concern worldwide. Young adults, particularly those between the ages of 18 and 30 years, face numerous psychological challenges associated with education, employment, relationships, and social expectations. The increasing prevalence of depression, anxiety, and stress among this population has prompted researchers to investigate preventive and therapeutic interventions.

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Previous studies have demonstrated that regular physical activity not only improves cardiovascular health but also contributes significantly to psychological well-being. This paper aims to explore the impact of physical activity on mental health among young adults and discuss its implications for public health practice.

### Literature Review:-

Numerous studies have established a positive association between physical activity and mental health. Research indicates that individuals who engage in regular exercise experience lower rates of depression and anxiety compared to sedentary individuals. Exercise stimulates the release of endorphins, serotonin, and dopamine, which are neurotransmitters associated with positive mood regulation. Aerobic activities such as walking, jogging, cycling, and swimming have been found particularly effective in reducing psychological distress. Several studies have reported that university students who participate in physical activities at least three times per week demonstrate better emotional resilience and lower stress levels. Furthermore, physical activity has been linked to improved sleep quality, which is a critical factor in maintaining mental health.

Despite these benefits, many young adults fail to meet recommended physical activity guidelines due to academic demands, technological distractions, and lack of awareness.

**Methodology:-**

This paper adopts a narrative review approach. Information was collected from peer-reviewed journal articles, public health reports, and academic publications related to physical activity and mental health. Relevant studies published within the past decade were reviewed to identify major findings concerning the psychological benefits of exercise among young adults. Data from international health organizations and research institutions were also considered.

**Discussion:-**

The evidence strongly suggests that physical activity contributes to improved mental health outcomes. One of the primary mechanisms involves neurochemical changes in the brain. Exercise increases the production of endorphins and serotonin, which help reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. Physical activity also serves as a coping mechanism for stress. Participation in sports and recreational activities allows individuals to divert attention from negative thoughts and develop social connections. Group-based activities further enhance emotional support and social interaction. Another important benefit is the improvement of self-esteem and body image. Young adults who maintain active lifestyles often report greater confidence and satisfaction with their overall health. Regular exercise also improves concentration, memory, and academic performance. However, barriers such as limited time, lack of facilities, and insufficient motivation continue to prevent many young adults from engaging in regular physical activity. Addressing these barriers requires coordinated efforts from educational institutions, healthcare providers, and policymakers.

**Recommendations:-**

Educational institutions should integrate physical activity programs into their curricula and encourage student participation in sports and recreational activities. Healthcare professionals should promote exercise as part of mental health prevention and treatment strategies. Governments and community organizations should develop accessible recreational facilities and awareness campaigns highlighting the mental health benefits of physical activity. Further research should investigate the long-term effects of different forms and intensities of physical activity on mental health outcomes.

**Conclusion:-**

Physical activity represents an effective and accessible strategy for improving mental health among young adults. The available evidence indicates that regular exercise reduces symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress while enhancing self-esteem, cognitive functioning, and overall quality of life. Promoting active lifestyles should therefore be considered a key component of public health initiatives aimed at improving mental well-being among young populations.

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