The Relationship Between Depression and Leisure Time Activity in Female High School Students

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Abstract

Anxiety and depression are two main psychological disorders that often can be seen among the adolescents. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between depression and spending leisure in female high school students with emphasis on physical activity. The Sample consisted of 136 high school female students in Sanandaj city and was a random selection. Two self-report questionnaires were selected for the present study. First questionnaires include spending leisure and second GHQ-28 was used to assess depression. K-S test, independent t-test and correlation were used to Statistical analysis. Result shows students depression in samples were moderate, and the findings indicated that the level of depression in the group who doing physical activity in their leisure time comparing with group who doing sedentary activity instead, had significant differences. Therefore doing physical activity in leisure time can help students to reduce depression.

Keywords: depression, leisure, female high school students;

Introduction

Atkinson and Hilgard (1997) explain depression and anxiety as a result of cognitive mistakes and illogical beliefs. Individuals who are susceptible to depression attitudinizize themselves negatively and critically. Depression and anxiety are mental conditions and states including characteristics such as apprehension, fear, and chaos, lack of life expectancy, future phobia, inferiority, asthenia, and lack of interest to life. Acute state of them leads to dangerous mental disease (translated by Baraheni).

The adolescences are in a critical period of life being mostly susceptible to disorders and mental damages. Iran is one of young nations. Mental and physical health is prominent to develop society materially and spiritually. Lack of mental and physical health in adolescences not only does not provide development of economics, science, and culture, but also destroys society in the future (Mohammadi, 2005). Mental-conduct disorders are made by lack of consideration to mental-physical requirements, imbalance in economic and social factors, and increasing process of broken home problems especially in adolescences. Depression is one of such disorders defined as states of...
incompetence, despair, activity or reflection decrement, pessimism, and sadness (Atkinson & Hilgard, 1997; translated by Baraheni).

Depression has several rating and kinds resulting from different reasons such as natural constitution, heredity, disorder of chemical activity and hormones, disorder of chemical anabolism in Encephalon transmitters, parent's death (especially mother) in the beginning of life, lack of parental interest, lack of self-respect and lack of self-confidence (Mehryar, 1994). Emotional problems such as depression are observed in the physical and mental development of adolescences. Task concentration, conflict, frustration, and disillusionment cause pessimism of adolescences to themselves, society and universe. It underlies depression especially inferior-oriented depression. This kind of depression is a set of inferior feelings in the territory of school or physical problems associated with social development and problems. It should be noted that general depression of adolescences is not clinical but mild depression or depression syndrome (Peterson et al., cited in Lotfabadi, 1998).

Half time outside the school is considered as leisure time for adolescences. Leisure time is a set of activities done eagerly after releasing from job work, homework, and commitments of family and society. The purpose is to rest, entertain, and develop abilities and latent talents. Leisure time is composed of activities without formal purpose called as without requisite (Haywood, 2001; translated by Ehsani). Students spend leisure time differently like watching TV, playing digital games, and physical activity. Increasing problems of mental health, physical activity is a tool to access appropriate mental and physical condition (Mehdipoor, 1997).

Yousefi (1981) compared depression among high school athletic and non-athletic students. There was difference in different aspects of depression such as with drawl, body image, irritability, worry of health, and feeling of tiredness. Athletes benefit better conditions. Ebrahimi (2001) also found that athletes were less depressed than non-athletes. Moreover, females were more depressed especially non-athletes.

Studies have shown that exercise training may reduce depressive symptoms in nonclinical and clinical populations (Goldfield et al, 2011; Hallal et al, 2006; Penedo & Dahn, 2005;) and in patients with major depression (Dunn et al, 2005; Singh et al, 2005; Singh et al, 2001; Dimeo et al, 2001). In addition to met analytic results, selected studies on different aspects of exercise treatment of major depression are presented.

Methodology

It was descriptive study. Data collection was done through field study. Population composed of 220 female students studying in 1st grade high school in 2010-2011 academic years. There were 136 subjects as sample selected randomly. The instrument was a questionnaire. GHQ is used to measure general health. Participants responded to shorten form of 28items devoted to component of depression. This questionnaire is used in 75 countries as the most valid instrument to measure students’ general health. The reliability was desirable (Cronbach α =0.83). Leisure Time Questionnaire was also used which developed by author. Validity was confirmed by academic professors.

Results

According to the results, students had an average age of 15±1.02 years. Table 1 shows the relationship between leisure time and depression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leisure Time</th>
<th>Independent t-test</th>
<th>correlation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV, Digital Game</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>7.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2.51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes. Dependent variable: depression

As shown in table 1, according to independent t-test, there was significant difference between kind of leisure time and depression (t (df = 134) = 4.07, p≤0.001). The mean value of watching TV and playing digital game (M = 7.16) was more than physical activity (M = 2.51). There were 85 students spending leisure time with watching TV and
playing digital game and 51 students doing physical activity. Moreover, according to correlation, there was a significant direct relationship between watching TV and playing digital game and depression ($r = 0.68$, $p \leq 0.001$). This means that as the watching TV and playing digital game scores increase, so do depression scores. There was a significantly reverse relationship between physical activity and depression ($r = -0.73$, $p \leq 0.001$). This means that as the physical activity scores increase, depression scores decrease.

**Discussion**

Although development of industrial societies has provided material welfare, mental and physical disorders are increasing as much as technology and industry. Adolescence is a greatly sensitive period due to rapid physical development, sexual maturity, identity formation, and personal independency. Lack of consideration of parents, teachers and persons in responsibility of education to mental and physical requirements damages adolescent and society irreparably (Mohammadi, 2005).

The purpose of the study was to study the relationship between leisure time “focused on physical activity” and depression “focused on physical activity” in female high school students in Sanandaj. There was significant difference between kind of leisure time and depression. The mean value of watching TV and playing digital game was more than physical activity. Moreover, there was a significant direct relationship between watching TV and playing digital game and depression. There was significantly reverse relationship between physical activity and depression. It was inconsistent with the results of previous studies (Ebrahimi, 2001; Paluska and Schwenk, 2000; The USA fitness Center, 2002; Yousefi, 1981). Paluska and Schwenk (2000) reported the effect of physical activity on decrease of depression and anxiety in different age groups. Leisure time improves mental health and decreases depression (Ebrahimi, 2001; The USA fitness Center, 2002; Yousefi, 1981).

It is suggested that facilities and sport spaces are made inside school and outside school until students especially female students can develop physical health, fitness and mental quiescence.

**References**


