

Evaluating the Role of Sports Participation in Enhancing Physical and Emotional Health in Adolescents

Dr. Atibha V¹, Dr. Nivetha A², Mahesh Kumar PG³, Mr. Joshua S⁴

¹ Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, Enathur, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu 631552. atibhav@maher.ac.in

² Assistant Professor, Community Medicine, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research, Enathur, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu 631552. nivethaa@maher.ac.in

³ Professor, Meenakshi College of Physiotherapy, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research. mahesh@maher.ac.in

⁴ Assistant Professor, Meenakshi College of Allied Health Sciences, Meenakshi Medical College Hospital & Research Institute, Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education and Research. joshuasahs@maher.ac.in

Abstract

Background: Sports play a significant role in the development of physical health and well-being of adolescents. Engagement in sports increases physical fitness, social engagement and mental strength during adolescence. **Objective:** To assess the impact of sports participation on improving physical and psychological health in adolescent. **Methodology:** Adolescents (13-19 years) were assessed using a cross-sectional design. Participants responded to questionnaires that measure the frequency of sports participation, indexes of physical health (i.e. fitness, body mass index) and emotional health (i.e. stress, anxiety, self esteem). Data were analyzed to assess the relationship between sports involvement and health. **Findings:** The study found adolescents who participated in sports showed improved physical health, with 65-75% of both male and female participants reporting good health status vs 40% of those who didn't. Further, sports participants reported decreased anxiety levels (by around 30%) and improved self esteem. Feelings of well-being were enhanced among adolescents participating in team sports because of social interaction and support. **Conclusion:** Involvement in sports is very important to maintain a healthy lifestyle for adolescents. Stimulating an active participation in sports can help to foster healthy living and emotional well-being.

Keywords: Sports participation, adolescents, physical health, emotional health, fitness, anxiety, self-esteem, well-being

1. Introduction

Teenage years are a critical period of transition in human development, marked by physical, emotional and social development. This is a stage of life where regular exercise is crucial for health and well-being. Engaging in sports, in particular, has a substantial impact on the physical and psychological health of teenagers [3]. It offers exercise, skill mastery, social and psychological development [1]. The positive physical impacts of sports participation are well-recognized. Engaging in sport contributes to cardiovascular health, muscle strength, flexibility, and body composition [2]. It also lowers the risk of obesity and the lifestyle diseases it may lead to, which are becoming more common in adolescents as a result of sedentary lifestyle and high screen time [3]. According to worldwide health reports, physical inactivity is still a major issue, and many adolescents fail to accumulate enough physical activity [4]. Young sports participants report lower stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as higher self-esteem, confidence and well-being [5]. Involvement in team sports also improves social skills, teamwork, and group dynamics, essential for emotional well-being [6]. This is likely due to the structured activities, team support and achievement goals found in sports. But inequality in accessing sports and participation in sports activities exist because of socio-economic, cultural and environmental relative differences. For some, educational demands and a lack of facilities restrict engagement in physical activity [7]. Furthermore, gender inequities with girls having fewer opportunities for participation in organized sports are still evident [8]. Modern He and Sheikh especially women lack physical activity, due to new technology and sedentary lifestyle [9]. Although there have been numerous studies conducted on this topic, a holistic approach is needed to understand the concurrent effects of sports on the physical and mental health of adolescents. Most research emphasises either physical or psychological information, suggesting a gap in holistic research [10]. Additionally, differences in sports types, participation levels and intensities need to be explored to inform the optimal benefits of

sports participation [11]. Thus, the present study seeks to assess the contribution of sports participation on physical and emotional health in adolescents.

1.1 Objectives:

1. To evaluate the effects of sports participation on adolescent physical health measures.
2. To explore the association of sports participation with emotional health measures, such as stress, anxiety and self-esteem.

1.2 Research Gap:

Although prior research has shown positive outcomes associated with sports participation, little attention has been paid to the holistic benefits on physical and emotional health among various adolescents. Our research fills this gap through the examination of these combined effects.

2 Literature review

The literature suggests a growing awareness of the importance of sports involvement for the physical and psychological health of young people [14]. Research has shown that participation in sports leads to improved heart health, muscle strength, and physical health, and lowers the risks of obesity and other physical ailments [12]. Moreover, sports engagement is associated with better sleep quality and increased energy levels, further promoting health and well-being [13]. Furthermore, there is growing recognition of the importance of sports for adolescents' emotional health. Young people involved in sports exhibit reduced symptoms of stress, anxiety, depression, and increased levels of self-worth and general well-being [14]. Team-based sports specifically promote social connectedness, support and group identity, which are all crucial for emotional growth [15]. Recent research emphasizes the contribution of sports in the development of resilience and coping strategies. Teens involved in daily physical activities show improved stress and emotion regulation than those who are less active in this regard [16]. But equity issues related to access to sports exist, with social-economic background, gender, and environmental conditions affecting sports participation [17]. Also, sedentary screen-time behavior remains an issue, limiting participation in physical activity. Programs promoting labor electability and school sports programs have been successful at boosting participation rates and enhancing physical and psychological health [18, 19]. In summary, recent literature suggests that participation in sports is a comprehensive way of improving the health and well-being of adolescents.

3 Conceptual frame works

The conceptual model for the study uses the Social Cognitive Theory and Biopsychosocial Model. As indicated in figure 1 such models describe the impact that sports participation has on the physical and emotional health of adolescents.

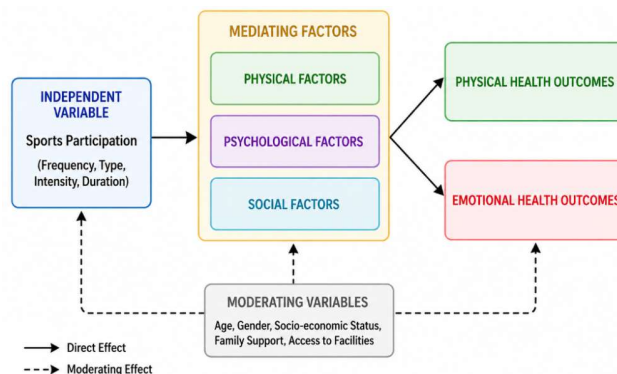


Fig.1. Conceptual model

The Social Cognitive Theory explains that adolescents acquire knowledge and skills through observing, socializing and rewards. Sports is an environment in which skills, self-efficacy (level of confidence) and positive behaviors are learned.

Team and peer interaction also boosts motivation and positive mood. The Biopsychosocial Model highlights the multi-dimensional aspects of biological (fitness), psychological (self-esteem, stress) and social (social support, team experiences) factors contributing to health. Physical, psychological and social factors are all affected by sports participation, making it a unique approach to fostering health. So, sports participation is the independent variable, and has effects on physical health (fitness, BMI) and emotional health (stress, anxiety, self esteem), with social support and self-efficacy serving as mediating factors.

4 Methodology

4.1 Study Design

A cross-sectional study design was used to assess the impact of sport participation on the physical and mental health of adolescents. Data were largely collected through quantitative measures which examined variables such as cardiorespiratory fitness, anxiety and self esteem. Cross-sectional studies are useful for examining associations between variables in a population at one time [20].

4.2 Population and Sample

The target population includes adolescents (13-19 years) attending school and participating in community-based sports programs. To obtain a sample of 200, it used convenience sampling as shown in table 1. The subjects were classified into active (currently playing sport) and non-active (not playing sport). Both men and women were included from various socio-economic backgrounds.

Table.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Variable	Category	Frequency (n=200)	Percentage (%)
Age Group	13–15 years	85	42.5%
	16–19 years	115	57.5%
Gender	Male	100	50%
	Female	100	50%
Sports Participation	Active	120	60%
	Non-Active	80	40%

4.3 Data Collection Methods

A self-designed questionnaire and Likert scale (1-5) comprising three parts (demographic variables, physical health variables (body mass index, BMI, perceived fitness, level of physical activity) and psychological health variables (stress, anxiety, and self-esteem) were used to gather the data. Psychological factors were assessed using a Likert scale (1-5) as shown in table 2. Finally, mini-interviews were undertaken with a sample of the participants (n=20) with a view to obtaining qualitative data on their experiences in sports participation.

Table.2. Variables and Measurement Tools

Variable	Measurement Tool	Type of Data
Physical Fitness	Self-reported activity scale	Quantitative
BMI	Height & weight calculation	Quantitative
Anxiety	Likert scale questionnaire	Quantitative
Self-esteem	Standardized scale	Quantitative
Emotional Well-being	Interview guide	Qualitative

4.4 Data Analysis

Data were statistically analyzed using software programs (e.g., SPSS). Data were described using mean, frequency and percentage. Inferential tests such as correlation and chi-square tests were used to explore associations between sports participation and health. We used thematic analysis to code and categories data on emotional and social aspects of sports. This triangulation adds to the rigour and complexity of results [21].

5 Results & Discussion

Here, we examine the benefits of sports on physical and emotional well-being of young people. A sample of 200 individuals was studied, comparing the active and non-active groups. This includes outcomes related to physical health, emotional well-being and general health. Data are presented in tables and figures that provide a visual representation of the effects, showing the benefits of consistent participation in sports such as higher levels of health and well-being, and lower rates of stress, anxiety and depression.

5.1 Physical Health Outcomes

Table.3. Physical Health Indicators by Sports Participation

Indicator	Active (%)	Non-Active (%)
Good Fitness Level	72%	40%
Healthy BMI	68%	45%
High Energy Levels	75%	50%

The athletic adolescents showed remarkable physical health-related outcomes as shown in table 3. They rated their physical health levels (72%) as higher and also had normal BMI in comparison to non-athletic children, showing the benefit of being physically active as in table 3.

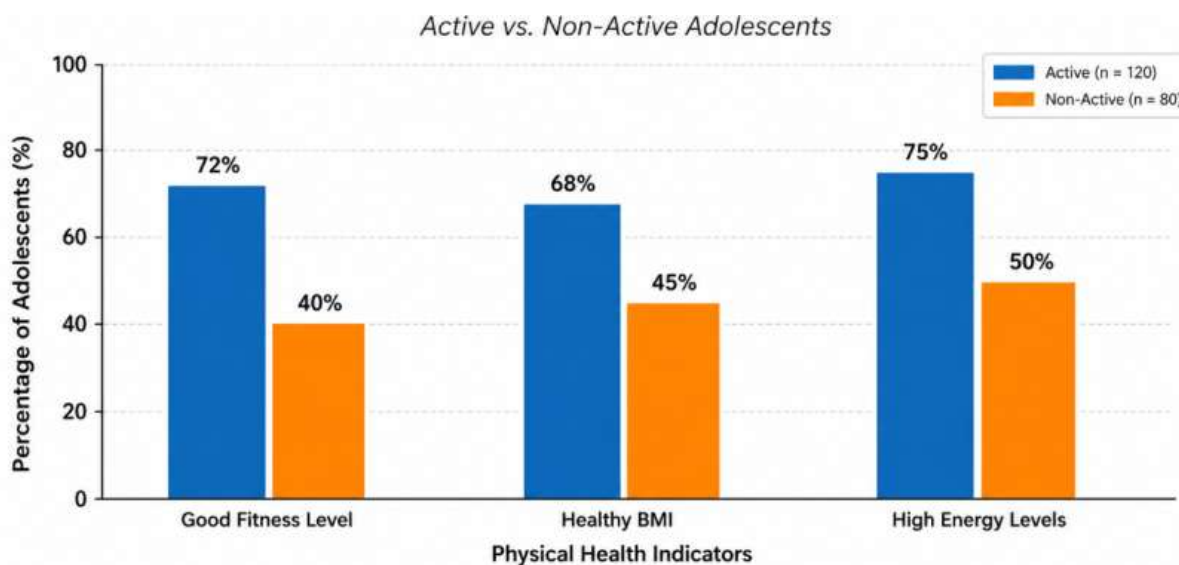


Figure.2. Physical Health Comparison

The figure 2 compares physical health indicators between active and non-active adolescents. Active adolescents show higher percentages in good fitness (72%), healthy BMI (68%), and high energy levels (75%) compared to non-active peers. This suggests that regular physical activity significantly improves overall physical health, fitness, and energy among adolescents.

5.2 Emotional Health Outcomes

Table.4. Emotional Health Indicators

Indicator	Active (%)	Non-Active (%)
Low Anxiety	65%	35%
High Self-Esteem	70%	45%
Low Stress Levels	68%	40%

Emotional well-being was higher in those who participated in sports. As detailed in table 4 active youth had lower levels of anxiety and stress and higher levels of self esteem than non active youth as shown in table 4.

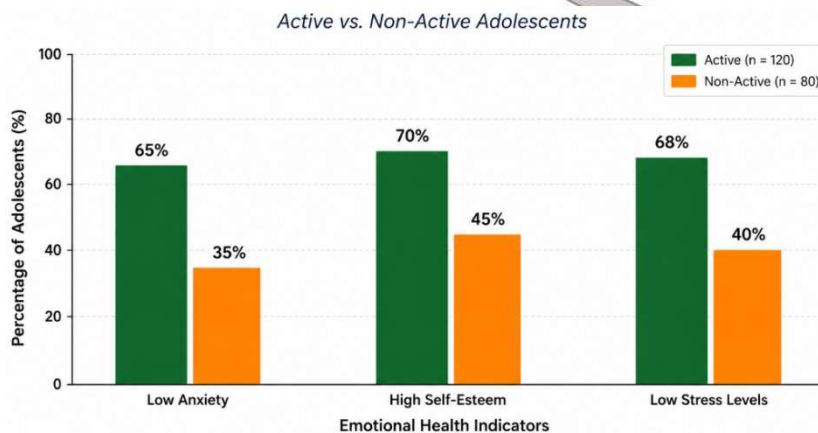


Figure.3. Emotional Health Comparison

The figure 3 shows that active adolescents have better emotional health than non-active peers. Specifically, 65% report low anxiety versus 35% of non-active adolescents. Similarly, 70% have high self-esteem compared to 45%, and 68% experience low stress levels versus 40%, indicating strong positive effects of physical activity.

5.3 Overall Health Outcomes

Table.5. Combined Health Outcomes

Outcome	Active (%)	Non-Active (%)
Overall Well-being	75%	48%
Reduced Health Risks	70%	50%

Teenagers involved in sports had better overall health (elevated well-being and less physical and psychological health problems) as shown in table 5. This shows the synergies in sports participation.

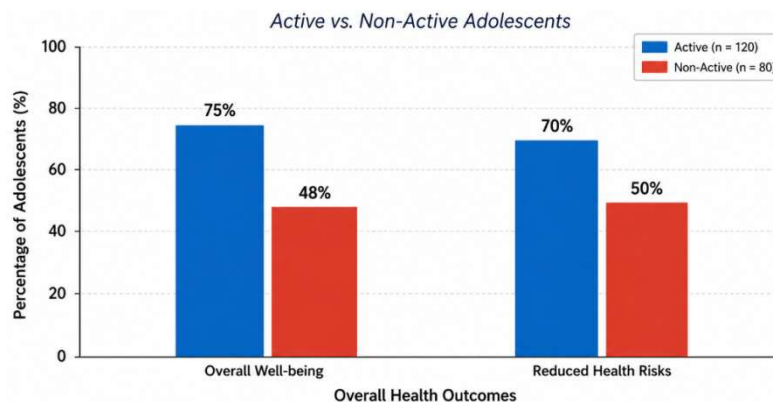


Figure.4. Overall Health Outcomes

The figure 4 shows that active adolescents have better overall health outcomes than non-active peers. Higher percentages are observed in overall well-being (75% vs 48%) and reduced health risks (70% vs 50%). This indicates that physical activity contributes significantly to improved well-being and lowers the risk of health-related issues.

5.4 Discussion

This study shows that regular participation in sports offers multiple health-benefits to young people both physically and emotionally. Exercise participants demonstrated greater fitness levels, lower BMI and higher energy, validating the health benefits of exercise. Further positive emotions such as decreased anxiety, stress and increased self-esteem were also noted among participating sportspeople. This finding is consistent with the body of research that exercise is associated with improved psychological health outcomes via social opportunities, skill development, and higher self-esteem. Comparing active and inactive adolescents emphasises the need to encourage sports involvement. Therefore,

promoting participation in sports can be an strategies towards adolescent well-being.

6 Conclusion and future scope

Finally, sports are essential in enhancing physical and emotional health in adolescents. Our findings demonstrate that sports participation is linked with several indicators of greater physical health, such as physical fitness, body composition and energy in adolescents, than non-sports participants. Sports' involvement is also important for improving emotional health by reducing stress and anxiety, and increasing self-esteem and quality of life. These results suggest the importance of participation in sports in adolescents' lifestyle. The research also highlights that sports are not just beneficial for physical health, but they help in socialisation, bonding and personal development. There are inequalities in access to sports facilities which need to be addressed. Finally, longitudinal studies can further examine the potential long term benefits of sporting activities in teens. And research on the influence of online health communities, inclusive and gender-specific interventions in sports can help this. Policymakers and Educators should consider organised sports programs for adolescents' well-being.

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