

Pharmacophore

ISSN-2229-5402

Journal home page: <http://www.pharmacophorejournal.com>



RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LEISURE TIME AND MENTAL HEALTH AMONG STUDENTS OF KHOY UNIVERSITY MEDICAL SCIENCES

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ARTICLE INFO

Received:

03th Jun 2017

Accepted:

29th Nov 2017

Available online:

14th Dec 2017

Keywords: leisure time, mental health, student

ABSTRACT

Background and Aim: leisure time can be a great indicator of personal intellectual peculiarities and the culture of community that one lives there. Proper utilization of leisure time, play an important role in the prevention of adverse effects on mental health and it is effective in providing mental health and liberal thinking. This study was conducted to find out the relationship between leisure time and mental health among students of Khoy nursing and health faculty.

Material and methods: In this cross-sectional study, 180 persons among students of Khoy nursing and health faculty were selected via census in 2016. To collect data, two questionnaires such as 25-question leisure time and 28-questions general health questionnaire of Goldberg/ Hiller were used. To describe the data in the form of frequency table, average indexes and standard deviation were carried out using SPSSv16 software. Also, independent sample T-test and one-way ANOVA were used to analyze the relationships at a significance level of less than 0.05.

Results: The majority of leisure time activities include sport (86.7%), religious activities (60%), membership of associations and organizations (58.9%), and participation in cultural and educational classes (48.9%). In the present study, the leisure time entertainment (LTE) of students include visiting relatives and friends (26.7%) and going to park (23.3%). The results showed that most of the students had relatively desirable mental health (90%). Moreover, statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between mental health score and doing sport, participation in cultural and educational classes, and type of entertainment was observed, which showed the direct and effective relationship between mental health and leisure time activities.

Conclusion: Today, with the development of science, technology, and inventing new methods to benefit from leisure time, it could be possible to use expanded leisure time activities in universities by controlling and applying individual and social management to create vitality and enhance positive mental health.

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To Cite This Article: Shahriar Sakhaei, Hassan Ebrahimpour Sadagheyan, Hossein Motaarefi, Soryya Zinalpoor*, (2017), "Relationship between leisure time and mental health among Students of Khoy University Medical Sciences", *Pharmacophore*, 8(6S), e-1173689.

Introduction

From the past to today, leisure has been an integral part of life and as a mirror of society, in accordance with the values, norms, and existing facilities; there is different approach toward spending leisure time [1]. Leisure means "comfort" and usually is used as opposite of work, doing daily activities and all occupations that cause fatigue. In leisure time, people usually engage in interests and hobbies that they enjoy doing them and they result in joy and happiness, which these activities by creating mental relaxation cause improvement in mental health and growth of personality perfection [3, 4].

Since the beginning of the human social life, leisure time always was in interest. It seems that leisure time and how to use it were originated by the emergence of well-being among some segments of the society and it became an important issue after the industrial revolution and the growth of the technology [6, 5].

Leisure time can be a great indicator of personal intellectual peculiarities and the culture of community that one lives there. Ignoring and lack of attention to this issue, especially among youth, result in behaviors inconsistent with the norms of society and culture such as addiction and irresponsibility [7].

The most important activities which are done in leisure time include rest and refreshment, compensation for physical and psychological damage caused by the continuous work excitement, fun and liberating from the ill uniformity, abandonment of everyday tasks and providing personality development, and development of physical and mental aptitude [5,4]. In today's stressful world that humans always feeling tired due to their busy schedule, the importance of leisure time is obvious and can play an important role in the mental health of people. Continuous and uninterrupted intellectual or practical employments not only cause physical and mental fatigue and mental disorder, but also minimize the learning ability, perceive information, and mental maintenance. People are trying to improve their mental states by keeping away from the main and daily tasks and choosing healthy activities freely on their leisure time [8].

Leisure among the students mostly has educational, cultural, social and educational aspects and it should not be considered as only entertainment. In this regard, careful planning provides the appropriate framework and style for learning. Moreover, the growth and prosperity of personality are provided by active participation in social and cultural life. Therefore, the range of cultural activities is expanded and student is offered a new area to self-improvement rather than wasting their time, where they can experience the luscious of all aspects of student life [9, 10]. Thus, student time could be the best opportunity to use cultural, educational and leisure time programs to provide vitality for academic achievement and continue the future activities. In Iran, 20 percent of population are the students; the youth who their energy can be used to the construction of the country by careful planning [2]. On the other side, ignoring the needs of the students results in mental health disorder, increasing deviation, and social damages [11, 12].

Mental health may include an individual's ability to enjoy life, ensuring their self-efficacy, self-relying, capacity for competition and self-actualization, and intellectual and emotional potential. Mental health is about the health of intelligence, mind, and thought. The symptoms of mental health in a person include away from anxiety and inability, ability to communicate with others, able to cope with the pressures of life [13, 14]. Mental health is one of the most effective factors in human improvement and maturity and this issue especially plays an important role in students. However, the students usually are the chosen people of the society, but several studies show that students are also suffering from psychological problems and emotional disorders [16, 15]. The students deal with various situations in daily and educational life that disrupts their spiritual and mental tranquility. Therefore, the daily activities became more effective by the presence of leisure and comfort, achieving goals and planning will be possible and More importantly, the mental health is provided. Unfortunately, our leisure time became a tool for enjoyment instead of cultural value in society and finally it converted to the factor of neglect [14, 16]. Communities to train students, who arguably the most vulnerable social groups, incur high spiritual and financial costs. Since any disruption in the mental and physical health of student could be a threat to investment, this issue is important [17]. Leisure time is an important tool that can be used with wisdom and intelligence for the perfection of emotional and mental aptitude, reconstruction of thought, and personality development [16]. According to the importance of leisure time in the vitality of student life and providing physical and mental health to achieve academic improvement, in the present study, the relationship between leisure time and mental health among students of Khoy nursing and health faculty was evaluated.

Material And Methods

This cross-sectional study was conducted in 2016, for this purpose, the questionnaires was distributed to total students (220). Only 180 completed the questionnaire. The essential permissions were taken from the faculty deputy. In the beginning, the purpose of the project was explained to considered group and was emphasized on confidentiality of information, voluntary participation, and commitment to uphold all ethic principles of research. To collect data, participants completed following forms: personal and social information form (year of entrance, field of study, grade point average, marital status, etc.); Researcher made questionnaire of leisure time had 25 items (for example: doing sport activities, to **participate in educational and cultural classes and** meet friends and acquaintances) with scales such as yes/no or very high to very low (depending on type of questions). The validity of questionnaires was approved by the perspective of ten experts in leisure time. To approve and determine the reliability of the tools, a pilot study was conducted on 15 students and the Cronbach's alpha was calculated (0.79). 28-questions Goldberg/ Hiller mental health standard questionnaire with four-point Likert scale from never (0 point) to more than usual (1 point). The questions of the mental health status of students were ranked based on the average scores on subscales. and the scores range of none (0-22), low (23-40), intermediate (23-40), high[18].After coding and using SPSS v.16. Description of information was presented in the form of frequency, mean indexes and standard deviation tables. In addition, to analyze the relationships between variables, inferential statistics tests such as Pearson correlation, T-test and one-way ANOVA were used.

Results

The majority of the participants were in seventh-semester (40%), studying nursing (73%), and single (90%). Participants had an average grade point of 15.90 ± 1.2 . Most of the participants' fathers were self-employed (79%) and had below high school diploma education (60%)(Table1). The majority of leisure time activities among students included sport (86.7%), religious activities (60%), membership in associations and organizations (58.9%), and participation in cultural and educational classes (48.9%) (Table 2). The most of the student had a desirable mental level (90%) (Table 3). Moreover, statistically significant difference ($p < 0.05$) between mental health score and doing sport, participation in cultural and educational classes, and types of entertainment was observed. In addition, a significant difference was detected between mental health scores and socio-personal variables such as years of entrances, grade point average, and father's job (Table4), and no significant difference was observed in other factors.

Table 1. samples demographic properties

frequency variables		Number	%
year of entrance	2016	42	23.3
	2015	30	16.7
	2014	36	20
	2013	72	40
marital status	married	18	10
	single	162	90
field of education	nursing	132	73.3
	health	48	26.7
father's job	employee	42	21.3
	self-employed	138	78.7
father's education	below high school diploma	108	60
	high school diploma	24	13.3
	Associate Degree	12	6.7
	Bachelor Degree and higher	36	20

Table 2. the frequency distribution some of leisure time activities among student

index leisure time	yes		No	
	Number	%	Number	%
Sport	156	86.7	24	13.3
participate in educational and cultural classes	88	48.9	92	51.1
Music	66	36.7	114	63.3
religious activities	108	60	72	40
Reading of the Qur'an	54	30	126	70
membership of associations and cultural organizations	106	58.9	74	41.1

Table 3. the frequency distribution of the mental health disorder in samples

standard variation	frequency	%
(22-0) none	60	33.3
(40-23) low	102	56.7
(60-41) intermediate	18	10
(84-61) High	0	0
Total	180	100

Table 4. determination of relationships and type of statistical test in between variables

Two Variables	test	R		p-value
mental health status / year of entrance	ANOVA	F=3.6	df=4	P<0.008
mental health status / grade point average	Pearson	0.258	-	P<0.014
mental health status / father's job	ANOVA	F=8.7	df=4	P<0.001
mental health status / marital status	t-test	F=2.1	df=26	P<0.001
mental health status / doing sports	t-test	f=24	df=17	P<0.06
mental health status and educational / cultural classes	t-test	F=24	df=17	P<0.060
mental health status / type of entertainments	ANOVA	F=9	df=4	P<0.001

Discussion

Spending leisure time as personal interest and motives, can be an opportunity for intellectual growth, moral ascendancy, and provide positive mental health by proper management; otherwise, it leads to social problems. According to the research findings, the subjects often chose sport activities as first priority (86.7%) to spend their leisure time, which showed the importance of sport in students' leisure time. Physical activity, especially group sports not only effective in individual physical and mental health care but also has a significant role in students socialization [19]. Sport is considered as an effective tool to respond to the psychological needs. Therefore, that people can spend their leisure time by taking advantage of it, and satisfy their needs and inner desires [20]. Less than 50% of student spent their leisure time participating in educational and cultural classes (48.9%) and listening to music in leisure time was about 36.7%. Rahmani reported different percentages for leisure time activities such as participation in educational class (10.2%), Artistic class (21%), sport (41.1%), and using a cell phone, SMS, and listening to music had the highest percentage [21]. The results were in agreement with the leisure time non-sport activities of present study and differed with sports activities. Therefore, it is necessary to create sports condition and provide the necessary facilities and more sports programs and competitions; they can provide the presence of students for athletic activities and public movement. According to the study of Babai, participation in religious activity and membership of association and organizations were, respectively, 28.3% and 20.7% [22]. The frequency of present study is dissimilar to Babai and it shows an increase in frequency. To maximize the participation of students in educational and cultural extracurricular classes for achieving life skills, time notification and planning should be done carefully.

Entertainment activities among student included visiting relatives and friends (26.7%) and going park (23.3%), which showed the preservation of traditional culture among young generation. According to a conducted study in Ilam and Shiraz, visiting relatives and going to park respectively had a first and fourth place in the field of leisure time, which were somewhat in agreement with the present study. Walking in the park or street, especially in proper season, has historical root in our culture. Poor mental health questions respectively included the inability to make decisions, lack of an effective role in fulfilling tasks and spending time for an affair. These questions more than ever placed in subscale of social function. Because individuals make society, leisure time not only affects individuals but also help macro plan of any society [23]. Therefore, to consider the aspect of social effects, it is necessary to encourage the student to participate in leisure activities. In the present study, a significant difference was observed between mental health status and physical, entertainment, educational and cultural activities ($p<0.05$). Besides, 90% of students had desirable mental health (it varied with type and amount of leisure time). Jonsdottir reported that individuals who spent their leisure time doing physical activities experienced less anxiety, stress, depression, mental and psychological disorders compared to inactive individuals [24], which was in agreement with the present study. Satisfy a particular need because of an activity is the most important properties of leisure time activities but its efficiency is uncertain due to the lack of an effective plan. Salimi reported a significant relationship between mental health and life satisfaction and people, who had desirable mental health, were more successful in their personal and professional life, understood the happiness, and enjoyed leisure time activities [25]. In the present study, a statically significant difference was observed between mental health and academic years, grade point average, marital status and father's job. Therefore, the results showed that singles took more time to leisure compared to married and presented the effect of educational progress and father's job on doing leisure time activities and positive changes in mental health that should be considered by the university.

Conclusion

Today, due to the advancement of science, technology and the information, wide range of leisure time activities can be used in accordance with individual interests, cultural differences, and social restricts to learn new skills and mental health improvement. Based on the results of present study and interaction of leisure time and mental health, leisure time should be designed to be social reconstruction. The poor leisure time results in mental health disorder and social deviance and corruption. Accordingly, planning and prioritization of targeted group activities such as camping, sports, scientific and recreational trips, and educational films in terms of interests and cultural and social differences, can provide a social function in the university by limited facilities.

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