

## Role of Sports in Social Health Promotion

Dear Editor,

Sports in a social context can be defined as a type of leisure-time physical activity (PA), organized to improve physical, social, emotional, and mental well-being among the participants. Due to the relevance of sports in a social framework, participating in sports activity is associated with psychological and emotional benefits such as improvements in mood, self-esteem, social interactions, social integration, social bonding, and overall mental well-being [Figure 1]. Examples of leisure-time PA are football, basketball, ping pong, volleyball, badminton, lawn tennis, and swimming. The aim and settings of these sports activities primarily focus on social interactions and exercise training. Promoting and encouraging sports activities in a community might be an effective intervention for preventing depression among older adults notwithstanding individual's functional limitations.<sup>[1]</sup> However, leisure-time PA could be utilized as a tool for chronic disease prevention in children, adolescents, young, and older adults.<sup>[2,3]</sup> Physicians, nurses, and social workers have an important role to play in social

health promotion by encouraging healthy adults, physically challenged individuals, and patients to participate in social sports, especially those who have a sedentary lifestyle.<sup>[4]</sup> Furthermore, regular participation in football activities was effective in improving the overall health of men who had type 2 diabetes and hypertension. In addition, team sports such as football have some advantages over individual-based exercise activities, with respect to maintaining regular exercise training, after participating in supervised exercise intervention programs, thereby encouraging people to participate in leisure-time sporting activities which are basically an effective way to promote social health.<sup>[5]</sup> Sports activities are motivational to the young, middle-aged, and elderly people in providing positive social interaction, and are therefore more likely to result in regular exercise continuation and devotion over a long period of time. Social sports should be promoted effectively because of its relevance in public health, ability to improve quality of life, reduce all-cause mortality and the occurrence and consequences of chronic diseases and disabilities.

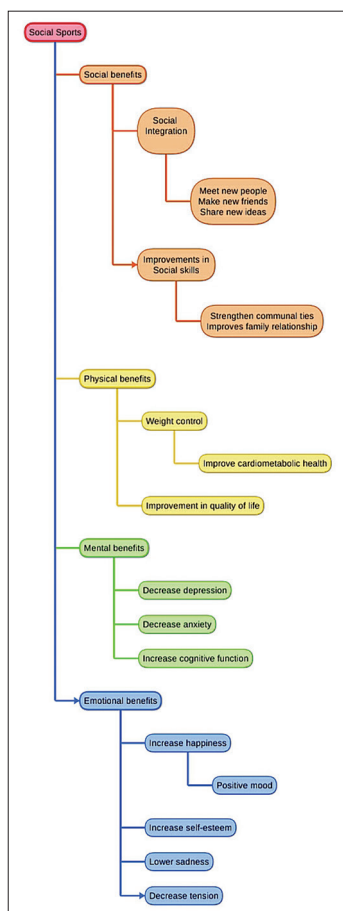


Figure 1: Role of sports in social health promotion

### Financial support and sponsorship

Nil.

### Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

### Chidiebere E. Okechukwu

Department of Biomedicine and Prevention, Physical Activity and Health Promotion, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Roma Tor Vergata, Via Montpellier, Roma RM, Italy

#### Address for correspondence:

Dr. Chidiebere E.n Okechukwu, Department of Biomedicine and Prevention, Physical Activity and Health Promotion, Faculty of Medicine and Surgery, University of Roma Tor Vergata, Via Montpellier, 1, 00133 Roma RM, Italy. E-mail: [Chidiebereokechukwu2015@gmail.com](mailto:Chidiebereokechukwu2015@gmail.com)

Received: 12 Sep 19 Accepted: 16 Nov 19

Published: 26 May 21

### References

1. Tsuji T, Miyaguni Y, Kanamori S, Hanazato M, Kondo K. Community-level sports group participation and older individuals' depressive symptoms. *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2018;50:1199-205.
2. Elsborg P, Nielsen G, Klinker CD, Melby PS, Christensen JH, Bentsen P. Sports-based recreation as a means to address social inequity in health: Why, when, where, who, what, and how. *BMC Public Health* 2019;19:1084.
3. Eime RM, Young JA, Harvey JT, Charity MJ, Payne WR. A systematic review of the psychological and social benefits of participation in sport for adults: Informing development of a conceptual model of health through sport. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act* 2013;10:135.

Letter to Editor

4. Khan KM, Thompson AM, Blair SN, Sallis JF, Powell KE, Bull FC, *et al.* Sport and exercise as contributors to the health of nations. *Lancet* 2012;380:59-64.
5. Nielsen G, Wikman JM, Jensen CJ, Schmidt JF, Gliemann L, Andersen TR. Health promotion: The impact of beliefs of health benefits, social relations and enjoyment on exercise continuation: Football as health promotion. *Scand J Med Sci Sports* 2014;24:66-75.

This is an open access journal, and articles are distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 license, which allows others to remix, tweak, and build upon the work non-commercially, as long as appropriate credit is given and the new creations are licensed under the identical terms.

Access this article online	
<b>Quick Response Code:</b> 	<b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir">www.ijpvmjournal.net/www.ijpm.ir</a>
	<b>DOI:</b> 10.4103/ijpvm.IJPVM_332_19

**How to cite this article:** Okechukwu CE. Role of sports in social health promotion. *Int J Prev Med* 2021;12:44.

©2021 International Journal of Preventive Medicine | Published by Wolters Kluwer - Medknow