

PERCEIVED BENEFITS AND BARRIERS TO SPORTS ACTIVITIES AMONG JAPANESE YOUNG ADULTS AGED 20-39

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Aim of abstract/paper - research question

The purpose of the present study was to examine the perceived benefits and barriers to exercise correlates of sports activities among Japanese young adults aged 20-39.

Theoretical background or literature review

Regular sports activities reduce the risk of mortality, incidence of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and some kinds of cancers. The benefits of regular sports activities for physiological and psychological health are well documented. However, despite the well benefits of sports activities, many Japanese young adults do not engage in sports activities sufficient for health benefits. Although those benefits are recognized, it is not easy to continue regular sports participation.

In Japan, previous studies that examined participation in sports suggested that 20-39 years old Japanese people were less active compared with any other generation. Understanding why young adults do not participate in sufficient sports activities is complex and multifaceted encompassing personal, interpersonal, environmental, and policy determinants.

Around the world, many studies have demonstrated a relationship between physical activity and the perceived benefits and barriers. Ishii (2009) developed a Japanese version of the perceived benefits and barriers to physical activity which is acceptable construct validity, criterion-related validity, internal consistency and inter-rater reliability. The perceived benefits and barriers scales including five subscales with 10 items. The benefits subscales consists of physical benefit (to get health / to increase endurance), psychological benefit (being relax / enjoying), social benefit (with a friend / wide circle of friends), weight management (to keep weight / to looks good), and self-improvement (challenge to the possibility / Increasing self-evaluation). The barriers subscales consists of discomfort (being tired /not fun), lack of motivation (being lazy / lack of motivation), lack of time (too much work / lack of time), lack of social support (no one to exercise together / Family is not recommended), poor physical environment (insufficient sports facilities /bad weather). Many studies which were published in Japan identified certain benefits and barriers to sports activities among older people. But, there is no date about the subject pertaining to Japanese young adults aged 20-39.

Methodology, research design and data analysis

The method used in this research was the questionnaire placement (self-administered) method. The data sample for this study consisted of 1,151 respondents to a population survey which was conducted through a Japanese research service organization. We have carried out the sampling to be the equivalent to the percentage of national average population in eleven cities including urban and rural areas across Japan.

The survey items were demographic factors, frequency per year to participate in sport, the scale of the perceived benefits and barriers to exercise. The data were analyzed using SPSS version18.0. All the analyses were stratified by gender and frequency of sports activities. Analyses were conducted with logistic regression to examine whether or not each perceived variable was related to meeting sports activities. Logistic regression was conducted in samples divided into men and woman adjusted for age and annual income as covariance.

Results, discussion and implications/conclusions

In the present study, 593 men and 558 women were classified into three groups according to their self-reported sports activities level (less than once a month, 1-3 times a month, one or more times a week).

Confirmatory factor analyses to examine the construct validity revealed acceptable fit indices (benefit scale: GFI=0.965, AGFI=0.922, CFI=0.956, RMSEA=0.083, barrier scale: GFI=0.971, AGFI=0.936, CFI=0.950, RMSEA=0.073).

We examined that the perceived benefits and barriers to exercise correlates of the frequency level of sport activities by the analysis of the adjusted logistic regression. For men, in terms of perceived benefits, 'self-improvement' (OR = 1.70; 95% CI: 1.15–2.52) was the strongest positive association with the frequency of sport participation (one or more times week). And 'social benefit' (OR = 1.01; 95%CI: 1.01–4.04) was positive association with the middle level of sport activities (one or more times week). On the other hand, in terms of perceived barrier, 'poor physical environment' (OR = 0.66; 95% CI: 0.15–0.89) was the strongest negative association with the frequency of sports activities (one or more times a week).

For women, in terms of perceived benefits, 'psychological benefit' (OR = 1.63; 95% CI: 1.00–2.66) was the strongest positive association with the frequency of sport activities (one or more times a week), in addition, 'psychological benefit' (OR = 1.92; 95% CI: 1.09–3.38) was the strongest positive association with the middle level of sport activities (1-3 times a month) followed by 'weight management' (OR = 1.80; 95% CI: 1.07–3.03). On the other hand, in terms of perceived barrier, 'poor physical environment' (OR =0.41; 95% CI: 0.24–0.71) was the strongest negative association with the frequency of sport activities (one or more times a week) We found that the perceived benefits and barriers to exercise

correlates of sport activities among Japanese young adults aged 20-39. In the self-improvement, social benefit, psychological benefit, and weight management significant correlates of attaining the most frequent level of sports activities were observed. Men and women had different patterns of perceived benefits correlates. For men, 'self-improvement (challenge to the possibility / Increasing self-evaluation)' and 'social benefit (with a friend / wide circle of friends)' was positive significant as benefit to sports exercise, it thought to be the cause of many Japanese young men aged 20-39 are very busy working in his company. For women, as same as many previous studied, 'psychological benefit (being relax / enjoying)' and 'weight management (to keep weight / to looks good)' was positive significant as benefit, it is possible that sports activities of women are related to spontaneous motivation. On the other hand, in terms of perceived barrier, 'poor physical environment' was negative significant as barriers to sports activities for both men and women. Especially, 'Insufficient sports facilities' might be related to barrier of sports activities.

This study has contributed to the advancement of the theory of perceived benefit and barrier in terms of findings factors related to young men and women. It was different from previous studies of elderly. These findings suggested that an intervention design that accounts for those correlates may more effectively promote physical activity among Japanese young adults aged 20-39.

References

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