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Motivational factors and effects associated with physical-sport practice in undergraduate students

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Abstract

Current high level of physical inactivity in undergraduate students is due to reasons that can be classified into external barriers such as time, lack of social support or internal barriers such as apathy toward physical activity. These obstacles may vary depending on the cultural and social context, age and gender of students. The purpose of this study was to identify the specific motivational factors and effects associated with physical-sport practice in undergraduate students, a literature review was developed, focusing on motivational student's perceptions and effects, and identifying research gaps for further researches. The lifestyle-related health and active behavior of an undergraduate student is complex, since it depends on motivational factors for physical practice as extrinsic factors (disease prevention, fitness) and intrinsic factors (pleasure, wellness, stress management), highlighting in students the motivation to achieve their goals, enjoyment or pleasure in practicing an activity. Among the results, students who participate in physical-sport practice are more physically active, so it is important to develop and encourage current programs to maximize their retention, stimulate self-motivation, feelings of autonomy, self-confidence and relatedness and work team.

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1. Introduction

In the year 2002, World Health Organization (WHO) defined the sedentary lifestyle as “a little movement”. Some authors indicate that “a person is sedentary when participate in physical activities in periods of time less than 20 minutes per day, with a weekly frequency lower than 3 times per week” (García y Correa, 2007; Verschuren, Mead,

Visser-Meily, 2015). Furthermore, according to WHO reports at least 60% of world population does not practice physical activities to obtain benefits for health (OMS, 2010).

In this context, the National Survey of Nutritional Situation shows that Colombian citizens have this same tendency, where is observed that the prevalence of minimal physical activity in adolescents between 13 and 17 year old was 26% and in people between 18 and 64 years old was 42.6% (Varela et al., 2011). The previous indicator shows a serious problem of public health, because according to OMS (2010), the physical inactivity constitute the fourth risk factor more important in mortality rates (6% of total mortality), while the overweight and obesity are the 5% of total mortality. However, the encouraging of sport participation is more than health promotion. Also, this promotion reaches the important social objectives as deterrent of crimes and the promotion of social integration and cohesion (OMS, 2010).

Besides of the convenience offered by physical-sport practice for the maintenance and improvement of health, it has been confirm that this practice is associated to a series of psychological benefits as the improvement of character and quality lifestyle, stress reduction, state of anxiety and depression improvement (Hülya, Asçi, 2003, cited in Gallegos & Piéron, 2009). Furthermore, there is a relationship between physical activity and self-esteem, self-efficacy, self-awareness, self-image of the person (Watkins & Dhawan, 1989, cited in Gallegos & Piéron, 2009). Consequently, physical activity and sport should be cultural and socially considered as an important factor in the body care, because improve the body and mental health, and quality life of people (Mozafari, 2002 cited in Salehnia et al., 2012; Wriessnegger et al., 2014).

However, numerous of benefits were set out, and available data from now show that physical activity reduces with the age, and there is a reduction more marked in late adolescence (between 15 and 18 years old) and adulthood (between 20 and 25 years old), ages where sedentary lifestyle behaviors are fixed (Ministerio de educación y Cultura, 2008). This aspect affirms the importance of the study of physical-sport practice in young people, because many behaviors of health habits of adults are established in late adolescence and adulthood, with regard to the reduction of physical activity in these ages is a worrisome tendency (Buckworth & Nigg, 2007) and special relevance within university institutions, since practically all undergraduate students are adults with multiple responsibilities that make they practice less physical activities. In the same way, the knowledge in the physical-sport practice in undergraduate students and their determinants can proportionate a fundamental basis to the change of inactive lifestyle of students and having physically active adults in future (Keating et al., 2008; Honari, Goudarzi & Heidari, 2010).

2. Contextualization of studies oriented to assess physical-sport activities in undergraduate young

According to OMS (2010) people with ages between 18 and 64 years old should accumulate 150 minutes minimum per week in a moderate physical activity or 75 minutes per week in a high physical activity or a combination between both. When this recommendation is compared to found data, it is observed low levels of intensity and frequency of the physical-sport practices in undergraduate students, an evidence of an unhealthy lifestyle.

This high level of physical inactivity in undergraduate students can be by reason that can be classified in external barriers as time, social support shortage or internal barriers as apathy to physical activities (Devecioglu, Sahan, Yildiz, Tekin & Sim, 2012). These obstacles can vary according to cultural and social context, age and gender of students. The analysis of these barriers is an essential step before planning strategies with the aim to increase the motivation and adherence to an active behavior (Niñerola et al., 2006, cited in Gómez López, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010).

Additionally, current studies in Spain universities indicate a high rate of inactivity by university community (Dias et al., 2008). With the aim of knowing the Colombian context, it is important to note some studies carried out in the country, where obtained results have been worrisome. In this way, Gómez et al. (2004, cited in Varela et al., 2011) in a research with a sample of 1045 women between 18 and 69 years old from Bogotá, found that 79.1% women did not do any moderate physical activity for 10 minutes minimum per day. In the same vein, Lema et al. (2009, cited in Varela et al., 2011) in a research with a sample of 598 students from Cali, they found that 77% of respondents did do little or any physical activity for at least 30 minutes minimum, with a frequency of three time per week.

Similarly, in a study about perceived barriers by undergraduate students in the practice of physical activity at the University of Murcia, Spain, the perception of external barriers like time, money, lack of facilities and social support have more importance than the internal barriers like apathy for physical-sport practice (Gómez López, Gallegos & Extremera, 2010). Linked to this, researches about barriers to physical activity in Brazilian undergraduate students show

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