

DIET, REST, SLEEP, RECREATION, SPORTS AND EXERCISE IN WELLNESS PROMOTION

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Abstract

The human body requires some wellness promotion activities in order to remain healthy and operate at maximum performance and these are diet, rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise. Most health problems are preventable as individual's lifestyle choices can lead to better health and longer life or if otherwise poor health and early death. This paper highlights the benefits of maintaining good diet, rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise. Good lifestyle does not only dramatically improve one's health, it makes amazing health difference for a good number of people. Poor diet, lack or limited rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise are unhealthful and can increase the risk of morbidity and mortality. This paper recommends amongst others that communities should be educated to be abreast with these wellness promotion activities for healthier living.

Key words: *Diet, Rest, Sleep, Recreation, Sports and exercise, Benefits.*

Introduction

Wellness is a multidimensional, holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual well being and an active process through which people become aware of, and make choices toward a more successful existence (National Wellness Institute, 2018). Wellness is a process of becoming, not having an end point; therefore, every person must strive to promote wellness in the day to day activities throughout life, live right and be free from diseases (Strout, 2012). Wellness promotion is based on preventive and behavioural change education activities, which entail helping people in the community to adopt, maintain healthy behaviours and lifestyles in order to enhance good quality health and increase length of life. Maintaining one's health should come first before any other thing because if one is not healthy, there will be no success, whether at home or at work. Wellness promotion involves the interrelationship of aspects of lifestyle, which include diet, rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise that the human body needs in order to be free from illness and operate at maximum performance to enhance productivity, community development and economic growth.

Benefits of Good Diet

Good diet is extremely important in wellness promotion. Choosing good and adequate diet is a major part of choosing good health and one of the most important factors in a lifestyle that leads to wellness and longevity. Ajala (2006) noted that a good diet can add great enjoyment to life and make a considerable contribution to higher levels of wellness. Similarly Etuk (2007) pointed out that good diet is the basis upon which good health is predicated. Maintaining healthy diet, which is healthy eating, is the practice of making choices about what and or how one eats with the intention of improving good health and promoting wellness. If the wrong quality or quantity of food is eaten, the body will suffer, become distorted and unhealthy. The type and amount of food should be appropriate to a person's age, eaten at regular intervals, with the largest meals early in the day, the lightest in the evening, and adequate intake of clean, pure water and avoidance of in-between meals or bedtime snacks (Mitchell, 2005). Unhealthy eating habits have contributed to obesity in both adults and children and even for people at a healthy weight, a poor diet is associated with major health risks that can cause illness including heart disease, hypertension, diabetes, osteoporosis, certain types of cancer and even death (Center for Disease Control (CDC), 2011; World Health Organisation, (WHO), 2018).

The benefits of good diets are numerous. Healthy diets are rich in health-promoting nutrients needed for overall wellness. Laskowski-Jones (2013) affirmed that diet and health (wellness) were intrinsically linked. Similarly, Christ (2018) noted that diet had a direct correlation to how an individual looks, feels and sleeps. Proper diet offers one of the most effective and least costly ways to decrease the burden of many diseases and their associated risk factors. Healthy balanced diets can cut and reduce the risk of premature death (Fontanilla, 2017). Secor (2017) wrote that a well balanced diet provides the right vitamins, minerals and nutrients to keep the body and mind strong and healthy as well as in maintaining a healthy body weight, providing energy and promoting a general feeling of wellness. Glover (2016) mentioned the benefits of quality diet to include increased productivity from increased focus and efficiency, enhanced and more stable moods, better sleep, decreased joint pain, reduced stress level as well as helping save money on future health costs, since it promotes wellness.

Ajala (2006) advised that the key to nutritious diet is to get adequate amounts from a variety of foods, the 'Basic Four' food groups namely, milk and milk products, meats and meat alternates, fruits and vegetables and grains products. WHO (2018) confirmed that specific recommendations for a healthy diet includes eating more fruits, vegetables, legumes, nuts, grains, cutting down on salt, sugar and fats. Good diet is vital to the growth and development of an

individual and also fundamental to the maintenance of good health, adequate functionality and promotion of overall wellness.

Benefits of Rest

Rest is a very important aspect in life and wellness which should be observed and practised, without which the body could be thrown into serious wear and tear from chronic overwhelming fatigue and stress, which could be inherently harmful. Every individual should make rest a habit. Even at work, rest periods should be observed. Workplace administrators and management should make rest part of their worker's welfare schedule. Jaiyeoba (2017) advised that adequate facilities should be made available for workers to break and rest. Asp (2015) and Pang (2017) pointed out that rest is sometimes equated with laziness and not something that was valuable; it is usually taken for granted by many people. Whether the individual is young or old, lack of rest can take a heavy toll on one's health, which could negatively affect performance and productivity.

In the absence of rest, the body becomes excessively tired and may breakdown at its weakest point. Diehl and Ludington (2011) noted that besides tiredness and loss of energy, there is also increase in irritability, tempers get short, patience diminishes and everything requires more effort, until finally the simplest tasks seem overwhelming. A major response of the body to lack of rest is stress. According to Mitchell (2005), without rest, stress sets in with warning signs like severe headache, backaches, skin rashes, bowel disorders or severe indigestion. The list of illnesses in which stress from lack of sleep may cause is quite alarming. Mitchell (2005) and Olabisi (2005) wrote that the warning signs, if disregarded, may lead to serious problems like stomach ulcer, mental disorder, immune system disorder, musculoskeletal disorders, chronic hypertension, chronic fatigue syndrome, burn out, breakdowns and heart attacks may follow.

Rest allows the body to renew itself, aids in healing of injuries, infections, including stress, emotional trauma, strengthens the immune system and can lengthen one's life (Diehl & Ludington, 2011). Rest is an essential component of working well, working smart, thinking well, innovating and increasing productivity (Pang, 2017). This means that an individual should once in a while temporarily allow himself or herself to let the responsibilities go, rest and experience harmony concerning one's feelings, actions and motivation. People should learn to leave all the demands that they carry around and just rest for a while in order to cope efficiently later. Taking time out to dwell and slacken one's pace or even ceasing activities, detaching from pressure and demands for a while implies taking time to relax, recover, renewing one's energy and strength.

Rest is not idleness, it is an ideal and essential key to better life and wellness promotion.

Benefits of Sleep

Sleep is, of course, the ultimate form of rest and a very important wellness promotion component. For many, getting to sleep is not the problem but making enough time for it due to busy schedule. It may be tempting to skip sleep to satisfy lifestyle and tight schedule, but since the body is an individual's most valuable possession, sleep time should strictly be observed because in the long run, lack of sleep could be counterproductive (Diehl & Ludington, 2011). Medic, Willie and Hemels (2017) saw sleep as a biologic process essential for life and optimal health. In otherwise healthy adults, short-term consequences of lack of sleep include increased stress response, somatic pain, reduced quality of life, emotional distress, mood disorders, cognitive and memory loss as well as accident while driving and performance deficits; in adolescents and children psychosocial health and school performance may be affected negatively from lack of sleep (WHO, 2004; Medic, *et al.*, 2017). Long-term consequences include hypertension, cardiovascular diseases, weight-related issues, metabolic syndrome, type 2 diabetes mellitus, stroke, colorectal cancer, generally disturbed immune system and all-causing mortality increases (Medic, *et al.*, 2017; Brueck, 2018).

One of the most obvious benefits of sleep is that it increases alertness and decreases fatigue. Sleep is so vital to health that people who are unable to sleep sufficiently or are deprived of sleep experience deterioration in every aspect of their health (Onohwosafe & Egenegbe, 2007). The value of sleep is apparent in a variety of positive changes in the body. Sleep scientists have found that even a short nap of 20 minutes could be effective in recharging one's mental batteries to restore depleted energy and boost one's brain to concentrate (Pang, 2017). Pang explained that when we sleep, our bodies shift to maintenance mode, devote themselves to storing energy, fixing or replacing damaged cells and growing, while our brains clean out toxins, process the day's experiences and sometimes work on problems that had been occupying our waking minds. Sleep is an important adjunct to a well-planned exercise programme (Onohwosafe & Egenegbe, 2007).

Centre for Disease Control (2017) recommended the following sleep schedule for different age groups:

Age group		Recommended hours of sleep per day
Newborn	0 – 3 months	14 – 17 hours
Infant	4 – 12 months	12 – 16 hours per 24 hours
Toddler	1 – 2 years	11 – 14 hours per 24 hours
Preschool	3 – 5 years	10 – 13 hours per 24 hours
School age	6 – 12 years	9 – 12 hours per 24 hours
Teen	13 – 18 years	8 – 10 hours per 24 hours
Adult	18 – 60 years	7 or more hours per night
	61 – 64 years	7 – 9 hours
	65 years and older	7 – 8 hours

In a large population study of health habits, it was found that people who regularly slept 7 to 8 hours each night had lower death rates than those who averaged either less than 7 hours or who slept longer and adults regularly sleeping more than 9 hours a night were often depressed (Diehl & Ludington, 2011). Wilson (2007) noted that sleep was so important to physical, mental and emotional wellbeing since it refreshes the mind, body, aids sound memory and during sleep, the body's immune system is most efficient. Sleep is one of nature's most effective restorer of sound mind and body, it sweeps away fatigue and promotes wellness.

Benefits of Participation in Recreational Activities

Recreation is an essential part of human life and wellness. It is any form of activity whether physical or mental that is indulged in for pleasure or pastime. It is also a good form of diversional therapy used to relax and calm the mind and body. According to Hurd and Anderson (2011), recreation is an activity that people engage in during free time, and which they enjoy and recognise as having socially redeeming values. Hence, recreation does not only benefit the individual, but also contributes to societal wellness. Thomson, Spencer, Raine and Laing (2008) postulated that recreation could be indoors like watching television or outdoors like group walking and advised on indulging more in active outdoor recreation. When indoors at home, people are more likely to snack, watch television which are more likely to make sedentary people be at risk of obesity, heart diseases and other related health problems. In outdoor recreation, they noted that there was a decreased likelihood of overeating and being sedentary, hence increased wellness.

Godbey (2009) affirmed that outdoor recreation touches on all those aspects of health and can enhance not only physical health but also emotional wellbeing and noted that public parks and outdoor recreation areas were developed for health purposes in the society. Outdoor recreation like brisk walking in groups encourages socializing with one another in the community giving room for togetherness and healthy society; to the individual, brisk walking for just three hours a week or half an hour each day is associated with health benefits like a 30 to 40 percent lower risk of heart disease, controlling blood pressure, managing weight, boosting good cholesterol level, lowering risk of stroke, reducing risk of breast cancer and type-2 diabetes, protection against hip fracture, preventing depression and constipation, improving sleep, relieving arthritis, elevating overall mood and sense of wellbeing (Godbey, 2009).

Caddick and Smith (2014) mentioned that recreation among families increases marital satisfaction. This promotes family wellness. Other benefits of recreation according to Caddick and Smith include increased motivation, social support, decreased depression and anxiety symptoms, psychosocial wellbeing and community reintegration. Akinboye, Akinboye and Adeyemo (2002) and Onohwakpor (2009) pointed out that a lot of activities man engages in are stress-ridden. Therefore through well planned recreational activities, the individual develops the ability to adjust to emotional, mental, physical and psychological demands of living due to the mad rush to fulfill the basic needs of life.

Recreation can help individuals to balance their lives and refresh them from their work and mandated activities. Onohwakpor (2009) and Hurd and Anderson (2011) gave examples of recreational activities to include swimming, jogging, cycling, gardening, climbing, canoeing, fishing, camping, games, music, travelling, reading, arts, crafts and dancing. Recreation can be seen as a medicine that can heal a stressed-out body and mind since a person cannot always put under control all that happens in life. Recreation is an important contributor to the quality of health, life and the degree of wellness promotion.

Benefits of Participating in Sporting Activities

Sport is associated with improved physical, social and psychological health and wellness. Ademola (2014) described sports as any competitive activity that individuals use physical and intellectual capacity in order to significantly contribute to their physical, intellectual, social, emotional and financial wellbeing. Sport is an organized spontaneous exercise or games, competitive or non-competitive process through which an individual obtains physical skills, mental relaxation and body fitness (Koudelkova & Kosova, 2007). Apart from providing physical and mental wellness, sports provide enjoyment to participants

and entertainment for spectators (Council of Europe, 2012). Sport means all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental wellbeing, forming relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels (Charter, 2014).

Sport is therefore a form of recreation that benefits the individual as well as the community. It promotes community wellness since sporting activities allow for positive community interaction, healthy competitions and economic development. Sporting competitions can foster peace where there are communal clashes. According to Gasser and Levinsen (2004), a research suggested that if sport-focused projects were locally grounded, carefully thought out and professionally managed, they can make a modest contribution to conflict resolution and peaceful coexistence in communities, especially regions of violence. This promotes community well being. Awoyinfa and Adebayo (2016) and Rush (2017) noted that engaging in well-designed sport programmes that educate, support and empower individuals can encourage positive behavioural change by enhancing self-perception, imparting self-esteem, promoting more conscious care and respect among them for their own bodies.

Sport with the numerous benefits, prevents many health problems and renders enormous positive influence on health. During sporting activities, the muscles, bones, joints, ligaments are made to work vigorously, which results in their adaptation to such intensive work. This makes the muscles grow stronger, adjust the nerve system to more effective functioning and helps in performing more difficult tasks than had been done before (WordPress, 2014). In children, it aids in weight loss, develop healthy bones, stronger cardiovascular systems, powerful lungs and encourage participation in sport as adults, thereby promoting lifelong health wellness; in women, it helps prevent osteoporosis and hip fracture (Rush, 2017).

Another benefit of sport, according to Awoyinfa and Adebayo (2016), is that it is highly significant in national development as it enhances a high degree of productivity and healthful living since health is the quality of life which enables man live most and serve best. Participating in sporting activities strengthens the muscle for muscular work, helps the participants to cope with work-related stress, increases work performance, enhances productivity, and reduced healthcare costs, absenteeism and sick leave. Sport acts as an antidote to several ailments and aids in the ability to sustain and maintain one's health and wellness.

Exercise and its Benefits

The importance of exercise to health and wellness is hard to ignore. Everyone needs exercise regardless of age, sex or physical ability. It is a key to good health. Participation in regular exercise patterns are considered as health-related behaviours. Plowman and Smith (2003) referred to exercise as single acute bout of bodily exertion or muscular activity that requires an expenditure of energy above resting level and in most, but not all cases, results in voluntary movement. Kylasov and Gavrov (2011) saw exercise as any bodily activity that enhances or maintains physical fitness and overall health. Ekpu (2009) noted that the body needs a sense of wellbeing that comes from exercise and when it is carried out, the state of health, mental, physical and emotional health of an individual will be enhanced. Exercise therefore is a body of goal-directed form of physical activities. Regular exercise that refreshes the body and mind is one of the factors that form the fundamental basis of healthy living. Brisk exercise is, in fact, a major factor in longevity and in prevention of illness like heart attack, stroke, cancer, and arthritis, while vigorous exercise increases the number of white blood cells, speeds up the circulation, thus speeding up the process of getting the defence forces to their battle stations (Mitchell, 2005).

CDC (2004) recommended moderate amounts of daily exercise for people of all ages, which could be obtained in longer sessions of moderately intense activities, such as brisk walking for 30 minutes or in shorter sessions of more intense activities, such as jogging for 15 to 20 minutes. Research reports that most diseases that manifest in adulthood have their roots in and during adolescence; reduction in movement during early years causes degeneration of muscles and psychological wellbeing, and distorts body image. Movement in later life becomes clumsy and there is fear of physical inactivity as evidenced in ageing people who had led sedentary lives in the past (Boroffice, 2004).

Olorunsola (2007) reported that the American Medical Association emphasised that exercise has beneficial effects in delaying organic disease and degeneration such as muscle atrophy, cardiovascular inefficiency, joint stiffness, which are possible effect of prolonged physical inactivity. Many surveys and experimental studies have shown that participating in exercise can result in the development of balance, agility, flexibility, strength, coordination and endurance (Olorunsola, 2007). Furthermore, adults who engage regularly in exercise do not become ill very often, have better body image, greater productivity efficiency and fewer accidents than those who do not engage in exercise.

Regular exercise has tremendous effects on the brain. Pang (2017) reported that simple exercise like walking can be a simple way to facilitate creative thinking and help the brain to engage in a right kind of focus, which encourages more mind-wandering to aid creativity. Exercise aids in solving

problems encountered at home or at work, checks mood swings, depression, relieves stress and improves sleep (Mitchell, 2005; Olabisi, 2005; Diehl & Ludington, 2011; Pang, 2017). Exercise increases the body's maximal oxygen consumption by increasing the efficiency of the means of supply and delivery. In doing so, it improves the overall condition of the body, especially important parts like the lungs, heart, blood vessels and body tissues, protecting the body against many forms of illnesses and diseases (Mitchell, 2005). Exercise helps to change one's outlook on life, makes one more relaxed and less fatigued. It is an important factor in the attainment of optimal health and wellness promotion.

Conclusion

Diet, rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise are important lifestyle factors in wellness promotion. Good lifestyle choices play key roles in keeping people free from diseases that crop up due to careless living habits and choices. Poor diet, limited rest, limited sleep, limited recreation, limited sports and limited exercise are unhealthy and can increase the risk of health problems and injuries. Likewise improving the quality of diet, observing and increasing periods of rest, sleep, recreation, sports and exercise can improve as well as maintain an individual's health and promote wellness. Encouraging individuals to make informed choices through wellness promotion activities education is far more likely to enable them take responsibility, be interested in their health and adhere to changes in lifestyle that could be beneficial. Since the choices one makes can lead to better health and longer life or poor health and early death. A healthy individual operates at maximum performance, which enhances productivity, community development and all round economic growth.

The following recommendations are made:

1. Communities should be educated by community and public health practitioners to be abreast of wellness promotion activities for healthier living.
2. School programmes at all levels should include wellness promotion activities, especially those that have to do with lifestyle modification.
3. Community and public health practitioners should encourage senior citizens to form wellness promotion clubs to keep fit.
4. Government at all levels should build recreation and fitness centres in communities and such facilities should be made accessible, affordable and available to community members and media houses should be encouraged to air regular wellness promotion jingles and programmes to aid positive behavioural change.

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