

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic

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Abstract:

The study aims to compare the quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic. For this purpose, we have used the survey descriptive method on a sample of 100 people over 65 years that was intentionally selected. For data collection, we used the scale of Quality of Life for the elderly by Bochra Ismail Ahmed (2013). After the results were collected and statistically processed, it was concluded that the quality of life of elderly practitioners was higher than that of those who did not engage in any physical activity. On this basis, the study recommended the role of society in supporting and encouraging the elderly to engage in physical and sport activity under the Corona pandemic.

KEY WORDS : quality of life ; sport activity for the elderly; corona pandemic.

المخلص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مقارنة نوعية الحياة بين كبار السن الممارسين وغير الممارسين للنشاط البدني والرياضي في ظل جائحة فيروس كورونا، ولهذا الغرض قام الباحث باستخدام الطريقة الوصفية للمسح على عينة من 100 فردا أعمارهم كانت ما فوق 65 عاما، حيث تم اختيارها بالطريقة القصدية، ولجمع البيانات استخدم الباحث مقياس جودة الحياة لكبار السن للباحث بشري إسماعيل أحمد (2013). وكانت أهم الاستنتاجات في هذه الدراسة أن نوعية حياة الممارسين المسنين كانت أعلى من تلك التي لم يمارسوا أي نشاط بدني. وعلى هذا كانت أهم التوصيات هو ضرورة تفعيل المجتمع في دعم وتشجيع كبار السن على الانخراط في النشاط البدني والرياضي في ظل جائحة كورونا. **الكلمات المفتاحية:** جودة الحياة؛ النشاط الرياضي لكبار السن؛ جائحة كورونا.

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1-Introduction:

Figures of Algeria's National Statistics Office indicate that the ratio of the elderly over the age of 60 increased from 9.1% to 9.3% between 2017 and 2018. The size of this category is 3.969.0000 people, which is an increase of 166.0000 compared to 2017 (Ben Kahla Al-Arabi et al, 2021, p.54). The term elderly is used to describe the phase of ageing or the process of becoming older. It is one of the fundamental stages of development, in which a series of physical, physiological and psychological changes affecting old people's way of life lead to the growth of many negative feelings, as well as the emergence of many problems that impede their compatibility with their family and society in general and affect their psychological and social status (Mohammed Al-Nubi, 2012, p. 11). Ageing is a stage of development, characterized by the beginning of a reverse shift in human growth. While growth in the earlier stages was moving towards renovation at different rates; renovation means continued construction versus demolition, as ageing begins, deterioration begins. The latter is initially at slow rates and then gradually accelerates, i.e. there is a pattern of physical and mental abilities decay, which characterizes the last stage of human life (Atwa Metwali, 2015, p. 76).

One of the variables influencing the lives of the elderly is the quality of life, which provides them with a sense and value of life. Quality of life includes a positive sense of well-being, the satisfaction of the individual and of his life in general, as well as his continuing pursuit of personal goals and the creation of positive social relationships with others. UNESCO considers the quality of life to be a comprehensive concept that encompasses all aspects of life as individuals are aware of, and expands to include the physical satisfaction of basic needs and the moral satisfaction that achieves the psychological compatibility of the individual by achieving himself. Thus, the quality of life has objective conditions and subjective components (Al-Ashwal, 2005, p. 13).

Physical and sports activity is one of the most important areas whose benefits have been reflected with regard to the health and disease prevention of old people. Many scientific and medical studies indicate that physical and motor activity has great value in the prevention and treatment of many diseases without any side effects. Physical activity was therefore considered the successful treatment of

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic

azzouz mohamed

these diseases (Salem Al Sayed, 2020, p. 71). Participation in sports programs also provides old people with opportunities for immunological imagination, which is a treatment for psychological and social conditions, considering that strengthening the relationship between the mind and the body is the basis of the notion of a healthy mind in a healthy body, which is the fundamental idea underlying sports science (Sobhi, Abd Elmajid, 2014, p. 215).

Due to the substantial data suggesting the health advantages of exercise, engaging in as much physical activity as possible as we age will become increasingly crucial for preserving population health and well-being. Most health organizations around the world have guidance recommending participation in physical activity. This includes WHO, which recommends that old people should participate in 150 minutes of moderate activity per week (Brad J. Stenner, 2020, p. 530). According to David Hall, despite the fact that physical activity is important for people of all ages, as evidenced by research and studies, many people perceive it as a form of welfare, and just a few people adopt it as a lifestyle and engage in it on a regular basis. Although it is important for all, physical and sport activity for older people has a special importance and becomes a necessity that must be ensured for a better life for the elderly (Amani Al-Safti, 2016, p. 289).

The world is currently dealing with COVID-19, which is caused by acute pneumonia syndrome. Its first appearance was in Wuhan in December 2019 (Huang.C, 2020, p. 195). The World Health Organization (WHO) announced that the outbreak of COVID-19 from the new corona virus had reached the pandemic level, or in other words, had become a global epidemic. During the press conference, WHO called on governments and all officials around the world to take urgent, swift and firm steps to stop the spread of the virus, referring to its statistics that indicate alarming levels of the virus prevalence (Shanwani, 2020, p. 10).

Under the current circumstances of controlling the world's emerging CORONA epidemic (COVID 19), the risk of infection spreads among all ages, and the causes of survival among the infected lie mainly so far in the level of innate immunity of the body and its ability to form antibodies to the virus in order to prevent it from spreading to the lungs. Older people around the world are therefore more likely to die than younger people as a lot of old people have many diseases, which weakens their immunity against infection.

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic

azzouz mohamed

Moreover, the quarantine procedures have reduced the physical activity of the elderly, whose movement has decreased dramatically. Old people who do not exercise regularly may become vulnerable to chronic illness, muscle weakness, general weakness and psychological illness as a result of staying at home. As specialists in the field of adapted physical activity, this study is designed to identify the role of physical sports activity in achieving the quality of life among the elderly during the corona virus pandemic by comparing elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of sports activity. We therefore ask the following question: Does physical and sport activity affect the quality of life of the elderly under the Corona pandemic?

Hypotheses of the study:

- Physical and sport activity positively affects the quality of life of the elderly under the Corona pandemic.
- There are statistically significant differences in the quality of life between elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona pandemic.

There are some previous and similar studies that dealt with this topic, some of which we mention:

- **Nabila Shehata's study (2018) entitled: "Recreational practices and their relationship to the quality of life among elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of recreational activities,**

as well as residents of some nursing homes for the elderly in Alexandria." the study aimed to identify the relationship between recreational practices and quality of life for senior people. The descriptive survey method was used, and the sample of the study consisted of 220 senior residents in some nursing homes in Alexandria (practitioners and non-practitioners of recreational activities). The study tools included the quality of life questionnaire for elderly people living in nursing homes and a form to identify the recreational activities in nursing homes designed by the researcher. After statistically processing the results, a diversity of recreational activities among the elderly was reached within the nursing homes, including (physical, social and cultural activities, arts and outdoor activities).The dimensions of quality of life have been identified among elderly recreational practitioners and non-practitioners. It was also found that participating in recreational activities has a significant positive impact on the quality of life scale

- for elderly practitioners. (Nabila Shehata, 2018).

Amani Al-Safti's study (2016) entitled: "The effectiveness of a sports recreation program at the level of social quality of life in the elderly"

which aimed to learn about the effectiveness of a sports recreation program at the level of social quality of life in the elderly. The empirical approach was used for the two groups: control and experimental. The sample of the study, which was intentionally selected, consisted of 38 elderly people aged 60 to 65 living in Tanta's nursing homes. They were divided into two equal groups of 15 people each, and 8 people were excluded for exploratory study. A form to measure the social quality of life among the elderly was used, in which it was designed by the researcher as a data collection tool. After the implementation of the proposed program, which lasted 12 weeks and consisted (3) sessions per week, and statistical analysis of the results, it was concluded that the proposed recreational sports program led to an improvement in the level of social life quality. Rather than just going to social clubs, the program has a greater impact on the quality of social life among the elderly (Al-Safti, 2016).

- **Gabrielle Pucci's (2012) study, entitled "Quality of life and physical activity among the elderly: a study on the elderly in Brazil",**

which aimed to analyze the relationship between physical activity and leisure time among the elderly, namely aerobic activities (walking- running- exercise) and between social, environmental and psychological relationships. The descriptive survey method was used, and the study sample consisted of (1461) elderly people living in the city of Curitiba, Brazil. The WHO Quality of Life and Physical Activity scale was used as a data collection tool and several models of linear regression were also used to analyze the relationship between physical activity types, fields, social relationships, a sense of well-being, and quality of life. The study's most important finding was the positive relationship between free time walking and social relationships. The study also revealed that elderly women who engage in regular physical activity have a higher quality of life than men. (Gabrielle Pucci, 2012)

2- General objective of the study:

The importance of this study lies in shedding light on the concept of quality of life for the elderly, as well as knowing the benefit of physical and sports activity in the elderly, knowing the negative psychological and health effects of not exercising in the elderly, working to open horizons for conducting future studies to compare different sports activities and their impact on Quality of life in the elderly.

This study aims to identify the level of quality of life and psychological and social adjustment among practitioners and non-practitioners of swimming among the elderly, and to compare the level of quality of life and psychological and social adjustment between practitioners and non-practitioners of sports activity in the elderly, as well as the criticism of a set of recommendations that may contribute to encouraging exercise The physical and sports activity of the elderly in order to confront diseases, especially when we are in this period that has known the state of the epidemic of the so-called Corona pandemic and its dangerous repercussions on humans, especially the elderly and the infirm.

3- Procedural definition of the concepts mentioned in the research:

- **The elderly:** They are the people who have lost a lot of their physical, health, psychological and social fitness as a result of “age” that may appear at the beginning of the age of 60, 65, less or more, depending on the general physical condition, health, psychological and social status of the elderly (Al-Bastawisi, 2019, p. 76) .

The researcher concludes that distinguishing the condition of the elderly is that it is the stage of life in which the physical and mental functions begin to deteriorate more clearly than they were in the previous period of life.

- **Corona pandemic:** COVID-19 is the disease caused by a new coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. The new virus was first discovered by the World Health Organization on December 31, 2019 after a series of viral pneumonia cases were reported in Wuhan, Republic of People's China. China: The duration of exposure to COVID-19 until symptoms appear is approximately five to six days on average, but may range from one to 14 days (WHO, 2020).

The researcher concluded from the above that there is a weakness in the immunity of the elderly, which will make them vulnerable to infection with the Corona virus, and therefore exercise is a stimulus for their immune system, which helps to avoid the consequences of the Corona virus on their health.

- **Quality of life:** defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as "the individual's awareness of his or her situation in life in the context of culture, the patterns of values in which he lives, and their conformity or mismatch: goals, expectations, values, physical health concerns, psychological state, level of independence, social relationships, personal beliefs, and his relationship to the environment in a way that general, and thus quality of life in this sense refers to an individual's own assessments of the circumstances. of his life" (WHOQOL Group, 1995).

The researcher concludes that the quality of life of the elderly is the good way in which the elderly walk in order to achieve good psychological, mental and physical health, as well as to achieve a good level of social life with others in society.

4- The methodological procedures used in the study:

4-1 Method and tools:

- **Study procedures:**

- **Study approach:**

The descriptive approach was adopted using the survey method because it was appropriate to the nature and objectives of the study.

- **Study sample and the method of its selection:**

Before selecting the sample of the study, we counted the study community, namely the elderly living in djelfa The study's sample included 100 old people aged 65 and up, 50 of whom were physically active on a regular basis and the other 50 did not participate in any physical sports activity. They were purposefully selected. 30 people were excluded in order to conduct the exploratory study(15 people from each group), resulting in a total study sample of 70 people aged +65.

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic
azzouz mohamed

Table N°1: Shows the distribution of the total study sample

Samples	Number	
Exploratory sample	30	15 practitioners
		15 non-practitioners
Actual sample	70	35 practitioners
		35 non-practitioners
Total sample	100	50 practitioners
		50 non-practitioners

Table N°2: shows the Anthropometric variables (age, height, weight) of the study sample

Variables	Measurement unit	Study sample (n=70)	
		Arithmetic mean	Deviation
Year	Age	1.59	69.93
Meter	Height	0.087	1.73
Kg	Weight	5.51	74.85

- Identification of variables and the method of its measurement

Independent variable: physical sports activity.

Dependent variable: quality of life among the elderly.

6.4. Study fields:

Spatial field: the study was conducted in WILAYA OF DJELFA.

Human field: elderly (+65) years, practitioners and non-practitioners of physical sports activity.

Temporal field: the study was conducted from 01/12/2020 to 30/06/2021.

- The scientific foundations of the tool:

- Scale: The Quality of Life Scale for the elderly by Boshra Ismail Ahmed (2013) was used as a data collection tool. The scale consists of (38) phrases that show us the true picture of the participant and provide us with the quality of life of the elderly. The scale includes five dimensions: the first dimension is the quality of physical life and included (09) phrases, the second dimension is the quality of social

life and included (08) phrases, the third dimension is the quality of environmental life and included (4) phrases, the fourth dimension is the quality of psychological life and included (7) phrases, the fifth dimension is the quality of spiritual life and included (10) phrases (Boshra Ismail, 2013).

- **Arbitrators validity:** The significances of logical validity of the scale to be applied to the elderly (+65) were used by presenting it to (08) arbitrators with a PhD in Sports Psychology and Adapted Sports Physical Activity from the Institute of Physical and Sports Activity Sciences and Techniques, University of Mostaganem. They emphasized the appropriateness of the scale and its ability to measure what it was put for.

- **Validity of the scale:** We conducted an exploratory experiment to confirm the scientific validity (integrity, reliability) of the study scale. The scale was distributed to an exploratory sample of 30 people (responses were received on 15-06-2021); 15 elderly people who are regularly engaged in physical sports activity during the CORONA pandemic, and 15 elderly people who are not engaged in any physical sports activity. The same process was repeated 10 days later to the same sample members. Then we extracted Pearson's simple correlation coefficient so that the reliability coefficients of the scale phrases ranged from the two values (0.72 to 0.93) as shown in table 01. The reliability coefficient for the scale as a whole reached 0.85, confirming that the scale is highly reliable.

- **Intrinsic Validity of the scale:** We used the intrinsic validity as "it is the most valid experimental degrees compared to the real degrees, in which experimental degrees are free of any measurement flaws. It is measured by calculating the square root of the test reliability coefficient" (Abdel Hadi, 1999, p. 171). Based on this type of validity, it was concluded that the values of intrinsic validity of the scale's phrases ranged from 0.84 to 0.96, as shown in table N°3. The intrinsic validity of the scale as a whole reached (0.92), reflecting a high degree of validity for the purposes of the study.

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic
azzouz mohamed

Table N°3: Intrinsic validity values of the study scale

QOL dimensions	Reliability	Intrinsic validity
Quality of physical life	0.88	0.93
Quality of social life	0.85	0.92
Quality of environmental life	0.93	0.96
Quality of psychological life	0,9	0.94
Quality of spiritual life	0.72	0.84
Quality of life scale	0.85	0.92

- Statistical tools:

- Arithmetic mean (AM)
- Standard deviation (SD)
- Pearson correlation coefficient
- T test for two independent samples (n1=n2)

4-2 Presentation and Analysis of Results:

Table N°4: shows arithmetic means, standard deviations and T test results of the differences' significance between elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical activity at the level of the quality of life.

Study variables	Practitioners		Non-practitioners		Calculated t
	SD	AM	SD	AM	
Quality of physical life	13.25	1.84	1.72	9.91	10.46
Quality of social life	6.08	0.4	0.29	4.59	10.52
Quality of environmental life	12.02	1.14	1.31	9.51	9.47
Quality of psychological life	17.65	0.46	1.13	14.54	14.54
Quality of spiritual life	15.77	0.71	0.89	13.42	8.57
Quality of life scale as a whole	65.4	1,83	5,32	51,97	29.69

Tabulated t value = (1.99) at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (68).

Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic

azzouz mohamed

According to table (04) that shows the arithmetic means, standard deviations and T test results of the differences' significance between practitioners and non-practitioners of physical activity at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (68), we note:

In the dimension of the quality of physical life, participants engaged in physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (13.25) and a standard deviation of (1.84), while the non-practitioners of physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (9.91) and a standard deviation of (1.72). The calculated t student value reached (10.46), which is higher than the tabulated t student estimated at (1.99), indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of physical activity practitioners.

In the dimension of the quality of social life, practitioners of physical and sports activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (6.08) and a standard deviation of (0.4), while the non-practitioners of any physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (4.59) and a standard deviation of (0.29). The calculated t student value reached (10.52), which is greater than the tabulated t student estimated at (1.99). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of physical sports activity practitioners.

In the dimension of the quality of environmental life, the study sample members practicing physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (12.02) and a standard deviation of (1.14), while the non-practicing study sample of any physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (4.59) and a standard deviation of (9.51). The calculated t student value (1.31) is greater than the tabulated t student of (1.99). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of physical sports activity practitioners.

In the dimension of the quality of psychological life, the study sample members practicing physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (17.65) and a standard deviation of (0.46), while the non-practicing study sample of any physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (14.54) and a standard deviation of (1.13). The calculated t student value reached (14.54), which is greater than the tabulated t student of (1.99). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of the study sample members practicing physical sports activity.

In the dimension of the quality of spiritual life, participants engaged in physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (15.77)

and a standard deviation of (0.71), while the non-practitioners of physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (13.42) and a standard deviation of (0.89). The calculated t student value reached (8.57), which is higher than the tabulated t student estimated at (1.99), indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of physical activity practitioners.

In the dimension of the quality of life scale as a whole, practitioners of physical and sports activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (65.4) and a standard deviation of (1.83), while the non-practitioners of any physical activity achieved an arithmetic mean of (51.97) and a standard deviation of (5.52). The calculated t student value reached (29.69), which is greater than the tabulated t student estimated at (1.99). This indicates that there is a statistically significant difference in favor of physical sports activity practitioners.

4-3 Discussion and interpretation of the results:

Table N°4 shows statistically significant differences at the level of significance (0.05) and the degree of freedom (68) between practitioners and non-practitioners of physical sports activity regarding all dimensions of quality of life (the quality of physical life dimension, the quality of psychological life dimension, the quality of social life dimension, and the quality of environmental life dimension), as well as the overall scale of quality of life for the benefit of elderly practitioners of physical sports activity. That is, the quality of life of practitioners is high compared to that of non-practitioners under the circumstances of Corona pandemic.

This is due to the importance of physical and sports activity exercised by old people during the Corona pandemic, which is a period characterized by fear and isolation. Given the current high prevalence of the pandemic worldwide, physical activity has taken on particular importance; enhancing immune function, reducing inflammation and thus potentially reducing infection intensity and symptomatic severity of (COVID-19). It also helps to improve common chronic diseases, which are strongly associated with Covid-19 symptoms.

Sports and physical activity of the elderly has many benefits that contribute to a positive investment of leisure time. The latter is considered significant because of the current conditions of life imposed by the Corona pandemic on this category of people. Old people engaged in sports and physical activity develop social

relationships among themselves. Moreover, Samah Salem indicates that the participation of old people in sports activities provides them with the opportunity to invest their positive abilities and energies, as well as helps them interact socially, thus increasing their demand for life and improving its quality (Samah Salem, 2015, p. 25).

On the other hand, it is one of the best ways to calm stress and anxiety, which contributes to better physical and psychological health that challenges diseases. Physical activity restores Cortisol (Stress Hormone) to normal levels, which positively reflects on the psychological and physical state, thereby efficient body immunity and improved quality of life.

The results of this study are consistent with many of the results of previous studies such as the Study of Mohammed Hassan Abu Tayeb (2019), the Study of Ben Samish aEid (2018), the Study of Nabila Shehata (2018), the Study of Amani Al-Safti (2016), the Study of Atwa Metwali Atwa (2015), The Study of Manal Mohammed (2014) and the Study of Gabrielle Pucci (2012), all of which agreed that physical sports activity has a positive impact on improving the quality of life of the elderly.

- Conclusion:

At the end of this study we can say that the importance of physical sports activity in improving the quality of life among the elderly has been reached, especially under the current circumstances.

A set of conclusions has been achieved through the current study, resulting in a set of recommendations that researchers consider necessary in such studies as follows:

- The quality of life level is high among the elderly engaged in physical sports activity compared to those who do not engage in any physical sports activity under the CORONA pandemic.
- There are statistically significant differences in the quality of life between elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical sports activity in favor of practitioners.
- Physical activity has a positive impact on improving the quality of life among the elderly under the Corona pandemic.

- Recommendations:

- The need for specialists to be interested in developing sports programs that are commensurate with the abilities of the elderly, as well as to adhere to “social distancing” procedures as much as possible in order to reduce the spread of COVID- 19.
- Follow the necessary preventive measures when exercising sports.
- Conducting research on elderly people of both genders in a manner similar to the current study.
- Emphasizing the role of society in supporting and encouraging the elderly to engage in physical sports activity because of its benefits.
- The media should be interested in encouraging old people to participate in physical and sporting activities.
- Working to remove barriers that prevent the elderly from practicing sports and physical activity.

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Quality of life among the elderly practitioners and non-practitioners of physical and sport activity under the Corona virus pandemic
azzouz mohamed

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