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The Effects of Practicing Swimming on The Psychological Tone in Adulthood

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Abstract

Swimming is the only sport to be recommended in more than 80% of the medical cases and to have a large target audience, accessible to both children and the elderly. From a psychological perspective, swimming reduces the mental tensions and anxiety, caused by everyday stress and the competition one, while avoiding hostility and frustration in life, in a beneficial way. What we propose in this paper is to highlight the role and importance of practicing swimming for the mental tone in adulthood. Women and men go through adulthood and old age in personal and complex manners, which involve numerous social, psychological and biological processes. The study results show that regular swimming practice has significant effects in terms of psychological tone in adulthood. It appears that women are more optimistic than men, as the average of this variable is greater for them than for men, both with the initial testing and with the final testing. As the significance level is statistically significant for both moments of the research, this allows us to say that the practice of swimming in adulthood has significant influence on the mental tone.

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1. Introduction

Studies have revealed the existence of three general steps in generating adulthood: young adulthood, middle adulthood and late adulthood. According to research, the majority of emerging adults and young adults have good or excellent health. The most common causes of the activity limitation are arthritis and other muscular-skeletal disorders (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2010). The relationship between behaviour and health illustrates the interaction

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between physical, cognitive and emotional development. What do people know about health influence what they do and what they do affects how they feel. Adulthood, especially between 40 and 60 years, is known, in the literature, as middle adulthood stage in which, although some deteriorations are starting to show, individuals still operate optimally and in some areas even reach climax. At this stage, individuals "lose" the "young" qualifier, but they gain the one of 'truly mature adult'. Health can be influenced by genes, but also by behavioral factors - eating behavior, when they are young adults- if they get enough sleep or how active they are and if they smoke, drink alcohol or use drugs - contribute greatly to health and well being. Swimming is ideal for adults, as it includes minimal stress and weight-bearing and low thermal load. For most adults, health and mental wellbeing improve, and the problematic behaviours are reduced, though the incidence of mental disorders, such as depression, increases. Both with emerging adulthood and young adulthood, physical and sensory capabilities are excellent, the factors related to lifestyle, such as nutrition, obesity, exercise, sleep, smoking and drinking or substance abuse, can influence health and survival. Middle-aged adults have a greater likelihood, than the younger adults or the older adults, to suffer from serious mental disorders: sadness, anxiety, agitation, feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness (Papalia, Olds & Feldman, 2010). According to specialist physicians in Romania, moderate swimming, gymnastics in water are physical activities that improve the cardiovascular condition; moderate exercise, balanced nutrition and the avoidance of smoking, together, provide an 80% reduction of the risk to develop cardiovascular diseases. Worldwide, the studies by Nualnim et al. (2012), determined the situations where regular swimming exercise lowers blood pressure and improves vascular function (Nualnim, Parkhurst, Dhindsa, Tarumi, Vavrek & Tanaka, 2012). Studies with older endurance athletes engaged in a variety of sports have suggested that exercise training protects against the age-related losses of muscle mass and function and helps maintain a leaner body composition. Body water which occupies approximately 74% of the lean tissue and 25% of adipose tissue may also fluctuate in response to aging and exercise (Tuuri, Keenan, West, Delany & Loftin, 2005). The psychic tonus model states that the left hemisphere is a booster of internal experience and behavior in general, and that the right hemisphere is a dampener Braun, CMJ., Desjardins, Gaudelet & Guimond, 2007). The purpose of this paper is to highlight the role and influence of practicing swimming in adulthood and on the psychological tone.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Study subjects

The study was conducted on a total of 16 subjects, adults, and aged 29 to 60, socio-professionally active. Of these subjects, nine were male and seven female. According to the Helsinki Declaration (2008) on the ethical principles of research on human subjects, the subjects included in this study gave their consent to participate in this research and for the data to be used in the work or other publications.

2.2. The evaluation of optimism

The mental tone level was assessed by the *How optimistic are you?* Questionnaire. The test measures the level of mental health and wellness. The questionnaire consists of 20 items. The higher the score of the subjects is, the more optimistic they are and the more confidence they have in themselves. It is known that optimistic people have a better health status and live longer; they cope more easily with the daily stress and are less prone to depression.

2.3. Aquatic Exercises

The subjects covered an aquatic exercise program three times a week, for four months. The subjects were evaluated before and after the implementation of the aquatic exercises program.

3. Results

The data were analyzed with the IBMSPSS Statistics19.

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