

Digital Public Health Marketing of Physical Activity and Its Effect on Wellbeing in Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Developing countries experienced insufficient levels of physical activity, particularly Saudi Arabia. In recent decades, Saudi Arabia has been experiencing a significant change in economy, urbanization, modernization, extensive and rapid demographic changes, and lifestyle transformation. These changes had negatively increased sedentary behaviors, inactivity physical activity, and lifestyle. Physical inactivity increases the risk of non-communicable and disease chronic diseases. **Objectives:** To highlight the gap in information such as gender inequality, cultural sensitivity, and social norms, including geography. **Methods:** Saudi Digital library, Google scholar, and UOW library. The terms used are “physical activity”, and “exercise” and research strategy were also adopted. **Results:** The recent Household Sports Practice Survey Bulletin in 2019 showed significant inequality between males and females. Also, the data showed different results relative to school type and gender. There are specific socio-cultural factors that limit women to participate in physical activities. Females have a low rate of total labor participants in the country. Geographical factors should be considered when establishing a promotion plan for physical activity, and there are no studies that focus on the effect of climate on participation in physical activity. **Conclusion:** The Saudi country has commenced numerous initiatives to improve people's health and well-being, and hopes to achieve this by 2030. It is important to build a community health center for females because there is a segregation policy to separate males from females in public places and workplaces. Having a national policy or promotion plan and collaborating with government parties is important. In addition, monitoring and evaluating the programs is important to ensure their success.

Keywords: Physical activity, Saudi Arabia, Health, Promotion, Exercise, and Wellbeing.

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study conducted in Saudi Arabia is to understand the reason behind high cases of unhealthy behavior among adults and adolescents. According to the study, a significant percentage of adults and adolescents have developed health problems such as obesity, among other health problems like chronic diseases, because they have embraced sedentary lifestyles. Women are more likely to develop unhealthy changes than men because they are less active. The study used a 2019 Saudi National data survey to analyze individual behavior to engage them in an appropriate co-designed activity. It involved sampling selection. The survey sample identified 26000 households as the selected sample representing the survey population. The study describes an implementation process specifically of digital social media through volunteers regarding high rates of unhealthy behaviors. It promotes individual

mental well-being in Saudi Arabia through an adult's physical activity.

The Saudi National Survey was used to conduct secondary data analysis. For instance, the bulletin's data from the survey relied on (Household Sports Practice Survey) or the field survey of households conducted yearly. Under this field of the household survey, a sample of households was visited to gather information explicitly withdrawn from the 2010 census frame and represent households in Saudi's administrative region. An electronic questionnaire containing questions was used to provide indicators and estimators associated with sports activities essential for helping beneficiaries gain insights that enable them to develop the activity. During the survey, individuals of different ages were chosen and asked varied questions.

For instance, a specific percentage of individuals aged 15 years and above in the kingdom, practicing sports activity were chosen. Under the indicator, individuals aged 15 years were asked several questions about sports activity. For example, Saudis, both males and females aged 15 years and above and practicing sports, were asked in the survey sample about sports activity practice conducted in minutes or more in a week. Afterward, Saudis' percentage of practicing the sport for 150 minutes per week in the kingdom was identified. Saudi males practicing sports and aged 15 years in the kingdom out of all Saudi males were separately asked about sports activities. The Saudi females of the same age out of the total number of the Saudi females in the survey sample were also asked questions about sports activity done for 150 minutes, and the Saudi sport activity practitioners were identified. Besides, the questionnaire contained questions asking reasons as to why some individuals aged 15 years kingdom-wide do not practice sports activity. The process is done by asking individuals questions like why they do not practice sports activity.

METHODS

Saudi Digital Library, Google Scholar, Scopus, and UOW online Library were used to search for published articles about promoting physical activity in Saudi Arabia to improve health and well-being. Search terms used are "Physical activity" And "exercise", "health" OR "wellbeing". Out of all of them, only Arabic and English publications of these articles were made a part of the paper analysis. These articles were considered, were peer-viewed, and were provided fully on the internet and Saudi government websites. Years of Publication were restricted to articles published from 2015 to 2020. Finally, when the literature is examined, attention is only given to identifying the gap to know the reason why and who participates in physical activity impacts health and well-being in Saudi Arabia.

Sample Selection

The survey sample was chosen by identifying 26000 households as a selected sample that represents the survey population at the level of the Kingdom and is distributed among the administrative regions as follows:

Administrative Region	Number of Households	Administrative Region	Number of Households	Administrative Region	Number of Households
Riyadh	4040	Asir	1800	Najran	1260
Makkah	4720	Tabuk	1420	Al-Baha	1160
Madinah	1800	Hail	1280	Al-Jouf	1300
Qassim	1280	Northern Borders	1300	Total	26000
Eastern Province	3240	Jazan	1400		

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DATA COLLECTION METHODS

In this field research, the survey candidates were selected based on various standards related to working like fieldwork experience and educational level. The research candidates were also chosen based on their attributes, such as good senses, psychological fitness, and good conduct. All candidates who met the selection criteria, especially from (GASTAT staff collaborators from some government entities) and qualified were

trained to handle various tasks. Trained individuals use direct contact to reach each household to fill out the survey questionnaire while collecting data. The first households to be visited were those located near the survey sample. The researchers managed to reach homes by using coordinates and guiding maps on the tablets. They first introduced themselves by showing their IDs bearing official GASTAT documents. They clarified their aim to households visited and presented the

overview of their survey and objectives. After giving a vivid introduction and clarification of their visit, researchers used their electronic questionnaire to collect data.

Each field researcher used his or her tablet device to collect data from the survey questionnaire regarding the specified timeframes and the specific number of family members, social characteristics, economic characteristics, and demographics. All field researchers located at different work locations used the feature called synchronization on their tablet devices to transfer or download completed data of any household to and from the database of GASTAT's headquarters. They also used electronic check rules to confirm and guarantee that the data keyed from each household's sports practice survey questionnaire is accurate and consistent. The electronic rules identify contradictions because they are designed with logical links that help field researchers detect errors from answers provided in the questionnaire and variables when completing the household's survey data. The rules are programmed to prevent mistakes from occurring if an answer contradicts another answer or piece of information provided in the questionnaire. Once the data had been collected, the field researcher, the inspector, and the survey supervisor in charge of the particular control region checked the data's authenticity. The Data Quality Room always monitored work locations from the GASTAT headquarters to ensure that no errors were committed during the survey. The Room controlled and frequently reviewed fieldwork performances during the collection of data until the last day.

RESULTS

The first results under the Household Sports Practice Survey findings are that only 20.04% is the percentage of Saudis who are aged 15 years or more practice sports activity in the kingdom for 150 minutes and more per week at the kingdom level. The pie chart used to display and compare results for both practitioners and non-practitioners in the survey shows that non-practitioners occupy the largest percentage, which is 79.96%. Based on the results, it is clear that non-practitioners in the total kingdom population occupy the largest percentage on the pie chart because they do not practice sports activity.

The second results under the Household Sports Practice Survey findings show that both males and females from Saudi Arabia aged 15 years and above occupy 22.34% out of the total Saudis in the kingdom practicing sports activity. The pie chart clearly shows that only 22.34% out of the total Saudis aged 15 years or more practice sports activities for 150 minutes per week. The other percentage of Saudis, representing 77.66%, has the largest number of males and females of Saudis who are non-practitioners of sports activity. The non-practitioners do not engage in any sports activity, and their behavior raises the alarm.

The third result shows that Saudi males aged 15 years or more and practicing sports activity in the kingdom from the total Saudi males occupy 32.67% of the total number of male individuals on the pie chart. The percentage mentioned above of males of Saudi engage in sports activity for 150 minutes or more per week at the Saudi male kingdom level. The remaining percentage, 67.33% of the Saudi males, is non-practitioner who, under no circumstance, practice sports activity.

The fourth result comprised practitioners and non-practitioners among Saudi females who are aged 15 years or more. According to the results showing females who practice sports in this particular kingdom, only 11.62% of the total females practice sports for 150 minutes or more per week out of the total number of females at this particular kingdom level. The non-practitioners amounted to 88.38% of the total number of females practicing sports activity. From the results, there is no doubt that the largest percentage of females in Saudi Arabia is non-practitioners because they do not practice sports activity.

The Household Sports Practice Survey's results also show that 17.02% of Non-Saudis, both males and females aged 15 years and above, practice sports compared to the total number of Non-Saudis in the Kingdom. 17.02% of the total population practice sports activity for 150 minutes or more in one week. The remaining percentage amounting to 82.98% comprises both males and females aged 25 years and above who do not practice sports activity. However, the non-Saudi males alone aged 15 years and practicing sports activity for 150 minutes per week amount to 19.54%. The Non-practitioners are 80.46% out of the total number of non-practitioners.

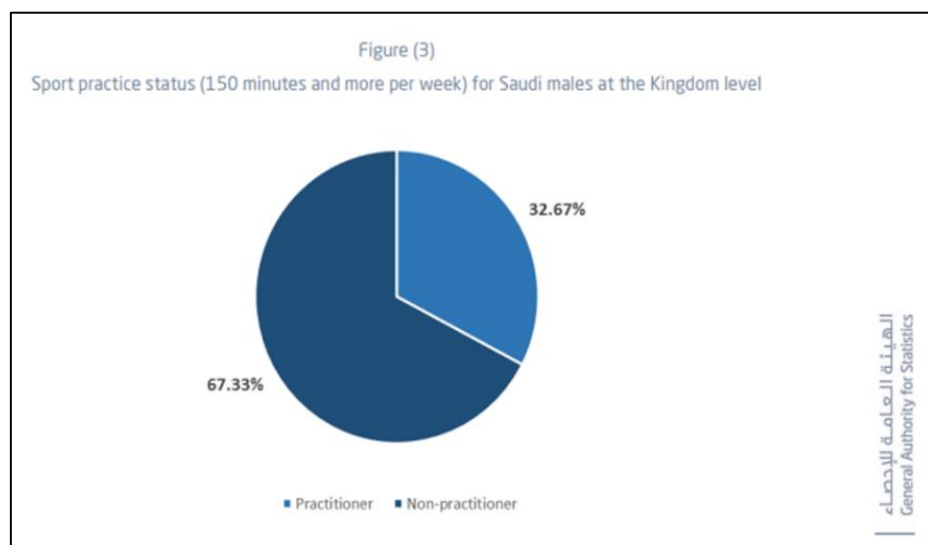
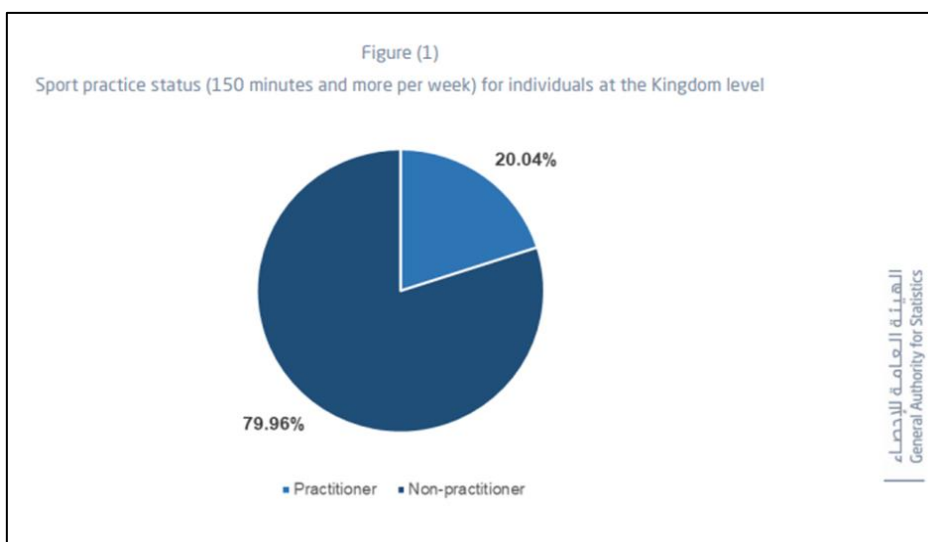
Non-Saudi females on the other side aged 15 years and practicing sports in the kingdom out of the total number of non-Saudi females amount to 10.63%. The practitioners from the non-Saudi females practice sports for 150 minutes per week. On the other side, the non-practitioners from the total population amount to 89.37%. The results for different sports activity types show that both Saudis and non-Saudis engage in different types of sports activity. The results show that walking is the most practiced activity done by 62.50% of the total individuals, followed by football practiced by 20.55% of individuals, and swimming practiced by 5.26% of the total individuals and other sport activity.

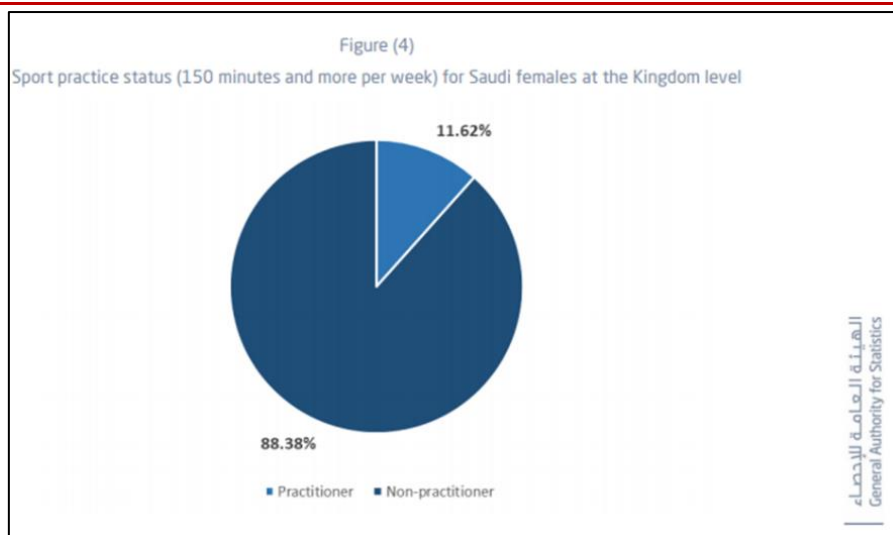
From the above findings, a larger percentage of women aged 15 years and above are more inactive than men, which means; they are prone to diseases that may arise due to a sedentary lifestyle. According to the findings, only 11.62% of all females are active, while the rest are inactive. The significant gap between women who are active and Inactive indicates that there is inequity or inequality. However, the general data from the Saudi national survey shows that the largest

percentage of Saudis is inactive. Regarding the collected data, the percentage of Saudis, both males and females from 15 years, practicing sport activities are 22.34%. The remaining percentage, which is 77.66%, comprises Saudis who do not practice sports activity. Based on the difference in percentage between practitioners and non-practitioners, it is appropriate to assert that many Saudis are likely to develop several illnesses related to their unhealthy lifestyle (Al-Sobayel 2015).

Also, the data shows that many men are active when compared to women. From the survey, women who are 15 years and above less active than men because men at the age of 15 years and above are more likely to practice sports activity than women at the same age. The rate is also high between adolescent boys and girls. For instance, adolescent boys are more active because they are likely to practice sports activity while girls at an adolescent stage have more sedentary behaviors and, therefore, inactive.

According to the study, many factors contribute to high sedentary behaviors between males and females in Saudi Arabia. As a developing state, Saudi Arabia has a unique culture, geography, and social norms. In its urban areas, society has modernity combined with conservative values, social norms, and traditional roles specifically expected, especially from women (Alsubaie 2015). The culture, socioeconomic, environmental context, and social norms, among other traditions, are significant contributors to non-practitioners who do not want to engage in active roles. The national survey also shows that lack of time is one of the common reasons among the Saudis as to why they are inactive. Lack of time accounts for 40.88% of the reasons why there is inactivity among the Saudis. On the other hand, the least reason accounting for 0.43% of sedentary behaviors among males and females is financial costs. Other reasons for being inactive include lack of facilities to use in the neighborhood, health reasons, and not desiring to play sports.





DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The nation must develop a plan under which both males and females in Saudi Arabia will be encouraged to live an active lifestyle to curb the sedentary lifestyle in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia can encourage individuals to incorporate physical activity programs into their lifestyles. For example, cultural physical activity programs must be tailored to the culture, and norms of individuals and address inactivity determinants within their locality and cultural sensitivity. Males and females must acknowledge their variables and behaviors impacting lifestyles.

Considering that there is an existence of segregation between females and males in gyms health clubs and public places, Saudi Arabia should build community centers for fitness specifically for females. If the Ministry of Health and the government collaborate and build adequate community fitness centers, many women are likely to engage in sports activities (Bajamal *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, the government should increase health clubs (gyms) for men to prevent them from developing sedentary behavior. Furthermore, the use of social media such as 'Twitter celebrities' can significantly help in promoting public health. The process saves time because all a person is required to do is post the message, which will reach millions of people using social media. The study shows that 98% of people use social media, and this means if one person posts a message on the media, there is a chance that the message will reach several people who will also reply to the post, forward, or retweet. And the end, more social media users can read the message.

In conclusion, practicing sports activity enhances one's health and well-being. Unfortunately, the study shows that in Saudi Arabia, many Saudis have embraced sedentary lifestyles. The majority of males and females from the age of 15 years and above are inactive for different reasons. For example, some are inactive because they have no time to practice sports activities

while others lack interest in playing sports activities such as football and cycling. Adolescents are also physically inactive, including children from the age of 10, which raises a significant concern because their sedentary behavior makes individuals prone to mental health issues. Females and girls still in adolescence are less active when compared to men and boys. Consequently, there is segregation between men and women, and this justifies why many women are inactive.

RECOMMENDATION

The Saudi Arabia government has established several programs and initiatives to improve the health and well-being of the Saudi people and call it Saudi Vision 2030. The Ministry of Health has around 19 initiatives and recognized these challenges and which importance of a healthy lifestyle in improving health in all segments of Saudi Arabia. Reducing sedentary lifestyles, especially for people who live in rural areas because of the climate and difficulty accessing the health club, so having indoor places like the gym will be beneficial as physical activities to prevent chronic disease. The challenges are not to start people to participate in physical activity but to keep them exercising. Therefore, the government needs to create more ways to make physical activity available in workplaces, community settings, and schools. In addition, document any initiatives for promoting, which is important to evaluate any initiative or policy that had been implemented to avoid any barriers or factors. the government needs to build community-based fitness centers for females near primary health centers, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. The Australian study reported Since there is a segregation of females and males in health clubs (gym) and public places, community sports clubs might considerably increase leisure-time physical activity participation (Al-Hazzaa & AlMarzooqi 2018). To achieve goals, Physical activity programs need to be culturally tailored and at the same time address locally specific inactivity determinants and cultural sensitivity. Also, personal variables which have

a major impact on people's lifestyles and behaviors must be acknowledged. Finally, there is a need to create a national promotion plan encouraging discouraging sedentary lifestyles and active living with contributions from all involved parties.

CONCLUSION

Saudi Arabia is a country with a unique culture, geography and climate. The government has started several initiatives and hopes by 2030 to achieve them. There is significant gender inequality between males and females that must be understood and searched for the cause. Moreover, cultural sensitivity and social norms are barriers that limit females to participate in physical activity. Therefore, the challenge is great, and the government must increase investment establish a national promotion plan, and make different ministries collaborate such as the Ministry of Education, Health, and other related, or can help to achieve a successful plan execution.

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