

Interest in sport and sport participation of Iranian citizens

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Abstract

Background: Throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the practice of sport has changed considerably in character. People have increasingly begun to practice sport in a more informal, spontaneous and individualized fashion, such as jogging in the streets, playing badminton, etc.

Aims: This study was designed to determine the interest in sports for all in Iranian people.

Methods: A questionnaire was randomly distributed to 4206 females and 5245 males in 12 provinces of Iran. The questionnaire was divided into four major sections: 1- Sport barriers and interests, sport motivation and physical activity background, 2- Factors affecting sport participation, 3- Frequency of subjects' physical activity sessions, and 4- Physical activity and recreational sports in Iran. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive methods (mean $\pm$ SD; frequency and percent)

Results: According to the results, 35.9 % of men and women were club members. "Lack of time" was the most important reason (22.56 %) for failure to participate in physical activity. Soccer, swimming, aquatic exercise and indoor soccer were at the top of the list of the most practiced sport activities by males. The list for females' counterparts comprised swimming and other aquatic sports, walking and cycling, respectively. The data evidenced that 40.34% of men and 34.97% of women never exercised or played sport.

Conclusion: According to findings, it seemed that swimming and aquatic sports, walking and soccer were the sports and activities most preferred by people in Iran.

Keywords: sport for all, recreational sports, community sports, Iranian people.