

161 - PILATES PRACTITIONERS' BODY IMAGE ANALYSIS¹ÉRICA PEREIRA NETO, Esp.²JÚLIA DE FÁTIMA RIBEIRO GAMA, Esp.³ANDRÉ GONÇALVES DIAS, Esp.⁴ANGELO LUIS DE SOUZA VARGAS, Dr. (Orientador)^{1,2,3,4}UNIVERSIDADE CASTELO BRANCO^{2,3}INSTITUTO FEDERAL FLUMINENSE⁴PROCIMH-RJ⁴RIO DE JANEIRO/RJ, BRASIL¹ericaneto@gmail.com**INTRODUCTION**

Physical activity can be understood as all and any body movement produced by the skeletal muscle system (voluntary) that promotes energy expenditure above the rest levels (Nahas, 2003). And this provides several benefits to the individual under metabolic, physiological, morphological and psychological variables (TAMAYO et al., 2001).

These authors infer that only the fact of practicing a regular physical activity, regardless the results on functioning and aesthetics, can lead towards a feeling or impression of a more positive body perception from the aesthetics and health points of view.

This study was developed aimed at identifying the body image of women who are Pilates practitioners and to compare the level of satisfaction as regards the body image of such women as opposed to women who do not practice a physical activity.

BODY IMAGE

Body image is a multidimensional construction that widely describes the internal representations of the body structure and physical appearance as regards ourselves and the others (DAMASCENO et al, 2005 apud CRASH, PRUZINSKI, 1990). The body image building process can be influenced by gender, age, means of communication, as well as the body relationship with other cognitive processes, such as beliefs, values and attitudes inserted in a culture (BANFIELD; McCABE, 2002; DAMASCENO, 2004; RICCIARDELLI; McCABE; BANFIELD, 2000).

Not only is the body image a cognitive construction, but also a reflex of desires, emotional attitudes regarding interaction with others, directly influenced by emotions, as well as neurophysiological aspects and the human-world experience places it in an endless reconstruction, i.e., evolving until death time. We can understand body image as a subjective experience that, from perceptions, thoughts and experiences, is evidenced from what the experiences tell us about ourselves. It is always in a reconstruction process, under social influence and interfering in the way of viewing the world and permeating interpersonal relationships and behavior (BARROS, 2005).

THE BODY

Social marks are present since the gestation period and from the moment of birth we observe that the body is modeled by domesticated, oppressive, repressive, suffocative, educational, and socioeconomic rules. They are the "muscle armors" imposed to people (MEDINA, 1998). Rodrigues (2006) agrees, as he affirms that no animal changes its own body voluntarily like humans do. And the body becomes more and more overloaded with connotations: object of youth obsession, grown with diets and therapeutically, etc. Once again, culture imposes rules regarding the body. And such life and world conceptions differ from culture to culture (FRANCO, 2006). The body has a dynamic intention geared towards humans and things with which the world is shared.

According to Medina (1998), in order to understand the body, simply talking about it is not enough; it is necessary to perceive the richness of its totality that is modified in its historical dimension, i.e., the behavior standards are acquired and transmitted from an individual to another, from generation to generation. According to Franco (2006), such dynamics are influenced by time and space. The body changes constantly according to the values of the society in which it is.

THE PILATES METHOD

According to Souza and Vieira (2006), the Pilates Method is more than a method, being considered a philosophy for training body and mind geared towards getting precise control of the body. This body and mind integration is obtained by means of concentration and body awareness adopted while the exercises are carried out (CAMARÃO, 2004).

The differential of the method is in the holistic view of its developer, which comprehends healthy body and mind. In this way, the method's practitioner acquires body and mind integration, mental conditioning, stress and chronic pain relief, self-esteem improvement, and body awareness, promoting relaxation (Mamber; Sgarioni, 2002).

The goal of this technique is to make efficient movements, increasing muscle performance in order to recover functional movements. The Pilates exercises have been created so as to make movements easier, allowing the practitioner to take positions and postures that minimize undesired muscle activities, which are frequently responsible for inefficient movement standards and early fatigue (CRAIG, 2005).

This method makes it possible to practice with floor exercises (Mat Pilates) and workout equipment (BARRA E ARAÚJO, 2007), which are classified as: Reformer, Cadillac or Trapeze Table, Barrel, Chair (Combo), and Chair (Wunda). These apparatuses facilitate and reeducate the movement (Becker, 2003). Auxiliary items of equipment, such as Swiss balls, resistance bands, mats, foam rollers, magic circles, etc, are also used.

Pilates provides significant results for pathology prevention and recovery of skeletal muscle functions, diminishing the imbalance between some muscle groups functions (GARCIA, 2004). Besides these advantages, Camarão (2004) infers that the Pilates Method also contributes to increasing self-esteem, as the exercises are carried out with pleasure and with a wide variety of movements. Regardless the age, anybody can have benefits with this method that improves life quality and offers fast results.

To do the Pilates Method exercises, it is important that the practitioners have control and awareness of their bodies, which works as high magnitude proprioceptive stimuli, which are responsible for gaining body awareness (GAGNON, 2005).

METHODOLOGY

The research has been carried out with 26 middle class women, from 20 to 40 years old, living in the same city (Campos dos Goytacazes, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil). Divided into two groups of 13 women each: Group A (experimental), practitioners of the Pilates Method, and Group B (control), non practitioners of physical activities. All the individuals were

previously informed about the proposed study and agreed to take part in the research voluntarily

The experimental group consisted of women who had taken more than 30 Pilates sessions. According to Joseph Pilates, developer of the Method, "in 10 sessions you will feel the difference, in 20 sessions you will see the difference and in 30 sessions you will have a new body". These women take Pilates classes on the floor and using apparatuses, as well as using auxiliary equipment. Classes are carried out in the same studio and by the same Pilates instructor. To make the research operational, according to its goal, the "Body Shape Questionnaire" (BSQ), adapted and validated by Di Pietro (2001), was used to measure the body image dissatisfaction level. This questionnaire is simple and consists of 34 questions, analyzing thoughts and behavior regarding the body. Thus, it can grade body dissatisfaction with perspective measurements.

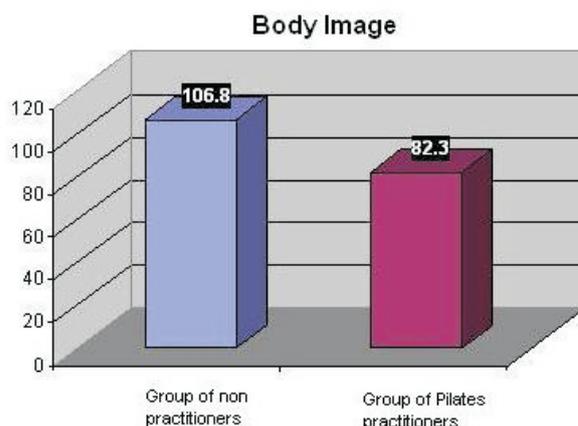
STATISTICS

The data obtained have been analyzed by descriptive and inferential statistics. For the former, average references, variance, standard deviation and other statistics methods were used, as necessary. The T-Student test was used for inferential analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

	Group A	Group B
Average	82.3	106.8
Standard Error	6,55	10,79
Median	71.00	117.00
Standard Deviation	23.63	38.92
Interval	67.00	112.00
Minimum	56.00	44.00
Maximum	123.00	156.00
Sum	1070.00	1388.00
Count	13.00	13.00

Table 1 - Descriptive Analysis of the Study



Graphic 1 – Body Image

After observing the results, we can affirm that the study has shown, by descriptive analysis of the "BSQ" (Table 1), averages of 106.8 for women who do not practice a physical activity and 82.3 for the group of women who are Pilates practitioners. This demonstrates that there has been no dissatisfaction as regards body image.

The body image is constructed and associated to self concept and identity, it has as depending factors the development of the neurophysiological system, perception, social and cultural relations. It includes "conscious and unconscious aspects" and is connected to the identity and existential experience of the individual, dynamic as the relations with the world (TAVARES, 2003, p. 36).

Although the averages of both groups remain in the first level (less than 110 points: you almost do not worry about your appearance), the group of Pilates practitioners has a significantly shorter average (82.3) than the group of those who do not practice any physical activity (106.8), the average of which is near the limit to the next level, that is, 110 points.

The so-called feminine press mystifies an ideal body standard for this gender – from its editorials – consolidating the role of this gender in our society. This media discourse becomes real when it assertively proposes a body transformation, not considering that the photographs of the models are shown after being edited with state-of-the-art technology and cosmetics, processes which are not viable in daily life (BRAGA, 2003).

Being opposite to the results of the present study as to the "BSQ" test as regards the descriptive analysis, it is observed that, in the literature review, studies that show a high degree of body image dissatisfaction in diverse age ranges, as well as self-perception disorders, when individuals, even having an ideal weight, perceive their bodies as if it were larger and not fitting the current beauty standards, in a larger proportion in female individuals (they think they are fat) and in higher social classes, more commonly in big cities, although such characteristics can already be found in countryside areas. (DE LUCIA, 2001; CAMPAGNA e SOUZA, 2006; GOMES e CARAMACHI, 2007; KAKESHITA e ALMEIDA, 2006).

To verify the differences between both groups, statistics have been made by using the T-Student test, noting that the difference between the groups was significant, with $p < 0.05$.

Another interesting point that must be noted is that only 15% of group A had a rate above 110 points, whilst 54% of group B had a rate above 110 points. Confirming that Pilates influences the level of body image of women between 20 and 40 years old in a positive way, which reaffirms the assertion that the method promotes the self-knowledge and movement harmony necessary for quality in daily life, providing a healthy life style.

Damasceno et al. (2005) teach that the main motives for people to start a physical activity program are the dissatisfaction with body image and the high value of having low levels of body fat.

With thinness and a slim body being indicative of happiness and prosperity, all that differs from those is subject to

discrimination and the search for a significant change in physical appearance is motivated solely by the desire of acceptance (ALMEIDA, SANTOS, PASIAN and LOUREIRO, 2005).

Studies carried out with 150 women, subdivided into 5 groups (non-obese, overweight and with obesity degrees I, II, and III) have shown choices associated with low weight representations, which means that, in representations of an ideal and real body, the image desires care for the stereotypes of a thin and slim body, identifying difficulties in body self-perception¹⁶.

According to Paim and Strey (2005), body image can be influenced and modified, among other factors, by reality and expectations and judgments which the collectivity are thought to have over individuals.

CONCLUSIONS

By means of the results obtained in this research, we have perceived that there has been no dissatisfaction level as regards body image. However, it has been evidenced that the Pilates Method's exercises provide a beneficial effect when applied to women from 20 to 40 years old, as only 15% of the interviewed Pilates Method practitioners have presented a higher level of body image dissatisfaction. Thus, the practice of the Pilates Method can be a resource that influences the body image positively.

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PILATES PRACTITIONERS' BODY IMAGE ANALYSIS**ABSTRACT**

The Pilates Method integrates body and mind; its approach is systemic and considers the individual's physical and emotional aspects. The concept of body image is a multidimensional construction of an individual. The aim of this study is to identify and compare the body image of Pilates practitioners (group A) and individuals who do not have a physical activity (group B). In order to accomplish this, the "Body Shape Questionnaire" (BSQ) was used with 26 women – from 20 to 40 years old. The T-Student test was used for inferential analysis. Based on the data obtained, we could observe that there has not been any degree of dissatisfaction related to body image.

KEYWORDS: body image, Pilates Method, physical activity

ANALYSE DE L'IMAGE CORPORELLE DES PERSONNES PRATIQUANT LA MÉTHODE PILATES**SOMMAIRE**

La méthode Pilates est une méthode qui intègre l'esprit du corps, son approche est systémique, considère la personne physique et émotionnelle. L'image corporelle est également conçue comme une construction multidimensionnelle de l'individu. L'objectif de cette étude est d'identifier et de comparer l'image du corps de praticiens de la méthode Pilates (groupe A) et les personnes qui ne pratiquent pas l'activité physique (groupe B). Pour cela, nous avons utilisé le BSQ Body Shape Questionnaire sur 26 femmes, âgés entre 20 et 40 ans. Pour l'analyse d'inférence utilisé le test t de Student. Sur la base de ces résultats, nous avons observé qu'il n'y avait pas les niveaux d'insatisfaction de l'image corporelle.

MOTS-CLÉS: l'image corporelle, la méthode Pilates, l'activité physique

ANÁLISIS DE LA IMAGEN CORPORAL DE LAS PERSONAS PRACTICAN EL MÉTODO PILATES**RESUMEN**

El Método Pilates es un método que integra el cuerpo-mente, su enfoque es sistémico, considera a la persona física y emocional. La imagen corporal es conceptualizado como una construcción multidimensional de la persona. El objetivo de este estudio es identificar y comparar la imagen del cuerpo de practicantes de Pilates (grupo A) y las personas que no practican actividad física (grupo B). Para ello, hemos utilizado el BSQ, "Body Shape Questionnaire" el 26 mujeres, de edades comprendidas entre 20 y 40 años. Para el análisis inferencial utilizado la prueba t de Student. Basándose en estos resultados, se observó que no hay niveles de insatisfacción con la imagen corporal.

PALABRAS CLAVE: imagen corporal, Método Pilates, la actividad física

ANÁLISE DA IMAGEM CORPORAL DE INDIVÍDUOS PRATICANTES DO MÉTODO PILATES**RESUMO**

O Método Pilates é um método que integra o corpo a mente; sua abordagem é sistêmica, considera o aspecto físico e emocional do indivíduo. A imagem corporal também é conceituada como uma construção multidimensional do indivíduo. O objetivo deste estudo é identificar e comparar a imagem corporal de praticantes de Pilates (grupo A) e indivíduos que não praticam atividade física (grupo B). Para isso, foi utilizado o questionário BSQ "Body Shape Questionnaire" em 26 mulheres, com idade entre 20 e 40 anos. Para a análise inferencial utilizou-se o teste –T de Student. Com base nos dados obtidos, pudemos observar que não houve quaisquer níveis de insatisfação com a imagem corporal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: imagem corporal, Método Pilates, atividade física

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