133 - PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE: DIAGNOSISING THE AWARENESS LEVEL OF THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

ANTENOR NEVES DE OLIVEIRA JÚNIOR
Military Police -Natal-RN-Brazil
antenorl4@uol.com.br
ALEX SHIRLO FARIAS
MARIA IRANY KNACKFUSS
Laboratory of Physical Activity studies and research -UFRN- Natal-RN-Brazil
Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte(UFRN),Natal/RN/Brazil

INTRODUCTION

The pace of modern life throughout the world has created veritable nations of sedentary individuals, disseminating an innumerable number of pathologies linked to hypokinesia, given that technological evolution has been increasingly reducing man's need for movement.

According to Cortez (1995), lack of physical activity is also responsible for decreased motor coordination and joint mobility, increased fatigue, loss of appetite and sexual satisfaction, in addition to other ills that are only perceived when demands are placed on the body and it is unable to perform its basic or vital functions.

There is no doubt that exercising and practicing sports regularly is beneficial to physical and mental health, aids in strengthening bone, helps maintain physical independence, retards the aging process, combats stress and anxiety, improves the cardiovascular and cardiopulmonary system, and prevents other chronic diseases, since studies have proven that sedentary individuals have a greater tendency to developing these maladies.

Initiating physical exercise without the least amount of knowledge is tantamount to walking blindfolded while trying to reach a certain destination. It is fundamental to establish goals and strategies for attaining desired objectives, and that is only possible by verifying the variables involved, so that the best possible planning can be instituted and/or maintained through an analysis of the data.

This assessment assists professionals in the field of physical education and by analyzing the performance evaluation of an individual within a group, conditioning programs can be established to set goals and reach pre-determined objectives. An increasing number of fitness academies, athletic clubs and sports centers have adopted this strategy by offering physical assessment tests to their members, as it is through these evaluations that individual physical conditioning levels are obtained.

Entities and institutions in general, be they public or private, goods or service, have long been seeking to adapt themselves to constant socio-political-economic transformations and at the same time to the growing demand of a more enlightened and exigent society.

When dealing specifically with the Military Police Institution as a provider of public security, constitutionally responsible mainly for ostensive uniformed policing and combating criminality, we immediately conceive military police officers as being physically, psychologically, technically and tactically prepared to fulfill their duties.

If one of these premises is not met, the service rendered to society will certainly not yield the desired results.

1.1 General Objective

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the level of awareness of military police officers belonging to the 2nd MPB with respect to the importance of physical activity for their professional performance.

1.2 Specific Objectives

-Identify the type of activity practiced, its frequency, the type of physical assessment and conditioning plan used by the corporation;

-Verify the satisfaction level of the officers with respect to their physical condition;

-Diagnose, from the perception of military police officers, the importance of physical activity for their professional performance, as a motivating factor, reducer of stress and medical expenses and enhancer of self-esteem.

2. METHODOLOGY

The population of this descriptive study consisted of 2nd MPB police officers, including commissioned officers and recruits. A sample of 70 (10 officers and 60 recruits) was obtained from this group, selected according to simple random probabilistic criteria and representing 40.32% of the battalion, located in Mossoró, Brazil.

Questionnaires and interviews were used as measuring instruments.

3. RESULTS

Table 1 presents the results obtained from the sample group. With respect to the function exercised in the organization, the result shows a higher percentage of professionals who perform a final activity, that is, providing services directly to society through ostensive policing duties , such as motorized, foot, shore, mounted and air patrols, totaling 83%, with the remaining (17%) performing intermediate (administration) activities.

Table 1- Awareness level of military police officers regarding physical activity and professional performance in Natal, Brazil, 2004.

Items observed	n	%
Activity performed	Intermediate	17
	Final	83
Satisfied with physical fitness level	Yes	32
	No	68
Frequent practice of physical activity	Yes	32
	No	68
Previous physical assessment	Yes	40
	No	60
Physical conditioning program	Yes	16
	No	84
Important relation between physical activity and	Yes	75
professional performance	No	25
Relation betwee n physical activity and medical	Yes	47
expenses	No	53
Physical activity as a form of combating stress and	Yes	57
improving self-esteem	No	43

In the above table, we observe a satisfaction level of 68% with physical fitness, a fact that is disturbing, since what is understood as a "Sine Qua Non" condition for exercising this profession, is being in top physical and physic condition.

A total of 68% of the respondents did not engage in physical activities while 32% exercised at least once a week, once again worrisome, considering that the risk of injury for those who have only one exercise session per week is high and in light of the fact that a minimum of three weekly sessions is required to obtain any physical benefit.

A majority of those interviewed (60%) affirmed not having undergone physical assessment. They understand that a physical assessment is an element of fundamental importance for practicing physical activities, because it is through this evaluation that conditioning programs are determined. This result is also to a certain extent disturbing, because it demonstrates the irregularity of physical assessment as a diagnostic tool and training control at the 2nd Military Police Batallion.

A significant number of the respondents (84%) affirmed they had never adopted a physical conditioning program, a fact that points to the necessity of initiating regular exercise. The non-practice of physical activity represents a level of pure sedentarism. It predisposes individuals to cardiovascular diseases, postural problems, diabetes, limited strength and flexibility.

Of those questioned, 75% had no doubt regarding the importance of physical activity in professional performance, a fact that represents a positive perspective in recognizing the necessity of physical conditioning as a form of improvement at work. From the moment that the awareness of the important role of physical activity in the professional and personal life of a military police officer becomes a constant within the internal policy of the corporation, the institution will rise to a level of excellence in terms of its personnel.

The negative responses related to lack of physical activity leading to increased medical expenses were 53%. However, a significant percentage (47%) agreed that there was in fact a relation. The absence of movement causes the body to stiffen, reducing its capacity and vitality, leading to hypokinesia.

The positive responses (57%) represent the majority of respondents who identified physical activity as an effective element in the combat against stress and in improving self-esteem. The literature agrees with these professionals when it states that a release of hormones takes place that leads physical exercise practitioners to a feeling of well-being and relaxation immediately following physical activity.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Although there is a total awareness of the benefits for professional performance derived from engaging in regular physical exercise, on the part of the majority of military police officers, there is evidence of a lack of regularity regarding its practice. It is therefore recommended that regular physical exercise be encouraged as a form of combating the inertia that characterizes a large number of police officers of the 2nd Military Police Battalion. This should diminish the number of officers seeking medical attention as well as promote periodic physical assessments of the group studied.

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PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT AND PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCE: DIAGNOSIS OF THE LEVEL OF AWARENESS OF THE MILITARY POLICE OFFICER

Abstract: The activity of the military police officer by its very essence presupposes an activity where physical conditioning derives from a "sine qua non" to performing the mission. Thus, the purpose of the present study was to analyze the level of awareness of 70 military police officers (10 officers and 60 recruits)belonging to the 2nd Military Police Battalion (MPB) with respect to the importance of physical activity and professional performance. The simple random selection represented 40.32% of the full operational strength of battalion headquarters, located in Mossoró/RN/Brazil. The participants completed questionnaires and underwent interviews. The results indicate that, despite the unanimous awareness by the military police officers of the benefits of physical exercise on professional performance, there was no regular practice of this activity.

Keywords: Physical assessment, professional performance, military police officer

ACTIVITÉ PHYSIQUE ET LA PERFORMANCE PROFESSIONNELLE : ÉVALUATION DU NIVEAU DE CONNAISSANCE DE GENDARMES

Résumé: L'activité de la gendarmerie suppose, par elle-même, une valorisation du conditionnement physique, qui constitue la condition « sine qua non » au bon accomplissement de sa fonction. Le but de cette étude est d'analyser le niveau de connaissance des gendarmes sur la contribution de l'activité physique liée à la performance professionnelle. Soixante-dix gendarmes (officiers=10 et soldats=60) ont été sélectionnés selon le critère d'échantillonnage aléatoire simple, soit 40,32 % de l'effectif du peloton (BPM) situé dans la ville de Natal-RN. Des questionnaires et des entretiens ont permis de démontrer que, malgré la conscience généralisée des bénéfices des exercices physiques réguliers pour la performance professionnelle, dans la pratique des gendarmes cette régularité n'a pas lieu. Les mot-clés: Evaluation physique, performance professionnelle, gendarme.

ACTIVIDAD FÍSICA Y EL ACTUAR DEL PROFESIONAL: DIAGNOSIS DEL NIVEL DEL CONOCIMIENTO DEL POLICÍA MILITAR

Resumen: La actividad de policía militaire en su gasolina conveniente, evaluaciones una actividad donde la deriva de tratamiento físico de una condición "condición sine qua non", al ejercicio de la misión. El presente estudio objectified para analizar el nivel del conocimiento del policía militar de referencia que la contribución de la práctica de la actividad física y la ejecución profesional de 70 policías militares (Oficiais=10 et soldiers=60) de 2º BPM, eligió según el criterio probabilista simple del tipo aleatorio, lo que es equivalente un 40.32% eficaz de los domicilios sociales del batallón, situados en la ciudad de Natal/RN, sometida la aplicación de los cuestionarios y entrevista. El punto este, aunque existe una conciencia unánime de las ventajas sucedió de regular práctica de los ejercicios los físicos el profesional de ejecución por parte de la mayoría de las

evidencias militares de policías si una ausencia de regularidad en cumplimiento a esto practica.
Palabras llaves: Valoración física, actuación profesional, policía militar.

AVALIAÇÃO FÍSICA E DESEMPENHO PROFISSIONAL: DIAGNÓSTICO DO NÍVEL DE CONHECIMENTO DO POLICIAL MILITAR

Resumo: A atividade policial militar na sua própria essência, pressupõe uma atividade onde o condicionamento físico deriva de uma condição "sine qua non", ao exercício da missão.Assim, o presente estudo, objetivou analisar o nível de conhecimento do policial militar referente a contribuição da prática da atividade física e o desempenho profissional de 70 policiais militares (Oficiais=10 e Praças=60) do 2º BPM, selecionados de acordo com o critério probabilístico do tipo aleatório simples, o que equivale a 40,32 % do efetivo sede do Batalhão , localizado na cidade de Mossoró/RN, submetidos a aplicação dos questionários e entrevistas.Os resultados apontam que, embora exista uma consciência unânime dos benefícios advindos da prática regular dos exercícios físicos ao desempenho profissional por parte da maioria dos policiais militares evidencia-se uma ausência de regularidade no tocante a essa prática.
Palavras chaves: Avaliação física, atuação profissional, policia militar.