59 - LIFESTYLE PROFILE OF PRE-COLLEGE EXAM ADOLESCENTS

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INTRODUCTION

The space dispute on the job market is becoming more demanding, which leads many individuals to look for a better education level, filling undergrad and graduate levels in the universities. Because of this scenery, millions of adolescents try every year to enter in a university through college entrance exam.

In this stage, it frequently happen a reorganization of the routine from the teenagers by changing time destined to leisure for total dedication on studies. The daily tribulations for studies, preparation for exams, external "pressures" (lot of times generated by parents, expectation and friends) (MARCON, 2002), added to typical changes on the adolescent period, everything is involved as a global way. By that, it is believed that the pre-college exam period can provoke changes in student's lifestyle.

Nahas (2003) considers lifestyle as: "group of habitual actions that reflects into attitudes, values, and opportunities in people's life" (p.19). The author also suggests five main components in lifestyle that could affect the quality of people's life decisively, in all ages:

•habitual physical activity;
•alimentation;
•stress control;
•relationships;
•preventive behaviors.

The adolescence period corresponds the ages between 10 and 20 years old and it is characterized by a deep and fast biological, emotional and social transformations on life (BARROS and NAHAS, 2003; PIRES et al., 2004; DE BEM, 2003). Studies have demonstrated that behaviors and attitudes in that life phase can predict or affect health condition in the adult life (BARROS and NAHAS, 2003). According to Pires et al. (2004), this phase has lot of transformations and a particularly vulnerability on the healthy of adolescents regarding stress. The anxieties in predicting the future, the psychological pressure for a professional choice, the search in satisfying adults' expectations, represent a strong emotional pressure effect for the adolescent.

Epidemic studies have demonstrated that physical inactivity increases with age (CDC, 2005), and that increase begins in the adolescence stage (DE BEM, 2003; HAVERLY and DAVISON, 2005). According to KEMPER, (apud SILVA and MALINA, 2000) when responsibility and social anxieties increase, there is a tendency to reduce the level of physical activity. Pires (2000) showed that the preparation for this kind of exams stimulate physical inactivity. In the same way, Marcon (2002) also showed that a great part of adolescents stops practicing some type of physical activity to preparation for the college entrance exam.

Pires et al. (2004), study habits of physical activity and stress in adolescents from Florianópolis - SC, and they concluded that when increases the level of physical activities, the level of stress reduces. Boas (2003), when studying adolescents in the situation pre-college entrance exam, the same conclusion was achieved. According to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - CDC (2005), the regular practice of physical activity in young people reduces the anxiety levels and stress and increases the sensation of psychological well-being. Low levels of physical activity were associated with several other negative behaviors in adolescents (DE BEM, 2003).

According to Nahas (2003), what we eat has a direct effect in health. The alimentary habits adopted by a population are also responsible for increasing the prevalence of countless diseases that exist nowadays. The adolescence is considered a fundamental stage for alimentary habits formation. Population researches are demonstrating a substantial increase in overweight/obesity prevalence in all age groups, mainly in children and adolescents which it is considered as being a public health problem. These behaviors are more present among students from the night period (DE BEM, 2003; NAHAS et al., 2006).

This study is justified for the lack of literature treating about adolescents' lifestyle in pre-college entrance exam phase. The relevance of this study is attributed with the evidences of association among healthy style and physical and mental health. The analyzed variables can supply elements for debates in the future about this theme.

The objective of this research was to evaluate the lifestyle profile of a group of students from a preparatory test exam course from the Federal University of Santa Catarina and propose behavior changes.

METHODOLOGY

The subjects were a group of students from a preparatory test exam course from the Federal University of Santa Catarina. The preparatory course is at night, free and to be accepted they had to pass a selective process of socioeconomic profile, besides their high school average grade. This group of students was chosen because if they are in a popular preparatory course, the students have larger need to enter in Federal Universities. In a class with 104 students, it were selected student between the ages 16 and 19 years old. Therefore, it were selected 55 students, with average age of 17,89 years old (±0,86), being 13 individuals male and 42 female. As instrument, it was used a questionnaire denominated Lifestyle Profile (NAHAS, 2006), in a adapted version for adolescents, which for each sentence, there were 4 possible answer. For each answer a value was attributed: always (3); almost always (2), sometimes (1) and never (0). Afterwards, it was partially used the questionnaire COMPAC - of Catarinense Adolescent Lifestyle (DE BEM, 2001). For statistical treatment for database, descriptive statistics was utilized, through Microsoft Excel version 2003, for average, standard deviation and frequency.

DISCUSSION

From the analysis of the Lifestyle Profile questionnaire, the general average scores of the group was 1,85, which is classified as regular stage of Well-being.

•Nutrition

Regarding the nutrition, the students obtained average score of 1,78. Most of the students (60%) do not avoid meals in fast-food restaurants. It is supposed that they pass great part of the day seated, and because of that they preference fast meals. Besides, 36,36% of the students don't possess the habit of having the meals calmly. Due to the little available time to feed, since most of them have to work, this condition leaves them more exposed to stress and indisposition (MARCON, 2002).

•Physical Activity

In relation to physical activity, the average of scores among the students was 1,02. The fact that 80% of the students alleged that they never practice physical education in school can be, partly, justified the fact of some students have already

concluded high school. In spite of that, only 12% told to practice some kind of exercise or sport.

•Preventive Behavior

Generally, the investigated group presented positive answer regarding preventive behavior. The score average was 2,64, having presented positive results in all questions. During the adolescence, the preventive behavior possesses special importance, because it is this period that the youth looks for their limits and challenges (NAHAS, 2003).

•Relationships

The theme about relationships also obtained positive average: 2,28, although 40% of the students have answered negatively regarding sport activities in groups as leisure, what reinforces the physical inactivity of these group.

•Stress

The scores average related to stress had the second smallest score: 1,53. All questions related to stress presented low scores. According to Pires et al. (2004), the concern with the present, the anxiety in predicting the future, the psychological pressure of professional choice, the search in satisfying adults' expectations, they all represent a strong emotional pressure for the adolescent.

Due to the smallest scores of the questionnaire were obtained in the components physical activity and stress, it was opted to apply a second instrument in order to have a deeper aspect for the investigation. Thus, the results of the analysis from the COMPAC questionnaire regarding physical activities and perception of health and well-being were answered this way:

The cut point adopted for adolescents' classification as sufficiently actives had to be above 300 minutes of physical activity a week of moderate to vigorous intensity (LONGE et al., 2002). However, only 23,6% of the students reached that number. The weekly average of the group was 219 accumulated minutes in physical activities, in other words, insufficiently actives.

Another indicator of the practice of physical activities in population studies is the type of transport is used for dislocation. In this study, 81,8% of the students goes by bus to school; in 25,5% of the time the distance traveled is inferior of twenty minutes, which could be substituted by walking. Among the types of physical activity, the favorite one was walking, in second place cycling and in third soccer.

According to CDC (2000), although researches have not demonstrate a direct association among physical activity and better academic grades, maybe this should be expected; there are evidences that the adolescents' participation in physical activity increases self-esteem and reduces anxiety and stress. The increase on students' mental health can also help in learning capacity, mainly when physical activity is allied with other healthy habits. Therefore, physical activity finds significant justification to be present in students' preparation for college entrance exams.

According to Nahas (2003), several positive and negative factors of our lifestyle affects our health and well-being. The stress is, usually, due to the lifestyle that is adopted and how it is faced.

In relation to health perception, 47% of the students consider their health bad and 53% classify as good. However, 67% state that they take some kind of medication frequently. The most pointed medications were for headache, stomachache and back pain.

Regarding stress perception, 50,9% of the students feel stressed sometimes, and 27,2% almost always feel stressed. The average of sleep hours was 7,5 hours during the week and 8,9 hours in the weekends.

Considering the evidences shown that if the level of physical activities increases, it helps to reduces the level of stress; and it is also believed that the increment of physical activities applied to this type of population could improve the perception of health and well-being.

CONCLUSIONS

To develop interventions that would promote a more active lifestyle, it is necessary to know the level, the aspects of sedentary and active behaviors, as well as the risk behaviors, in each specific population group.

After the analysis of this research, it can be suggested that the studied adolescents presented a lifestyle profile considered as regular, with level of physical activity considered as insufficiently active, alimentation habits irregular and high stress perception in this pre-college entrance exam period. Being that a preoccupying status, by the fact that adolescence are in a decisive phase for habits in their adult life; and also because in this phase they need physical health, mental health, disposition and well-being; in other words, a more favorable lifestyle to their important moment - the college entrance.

The evidences mentioned previously are enough to promote healthy habits through, for instance, active leisure, and information as lectures and posters with the intention of improving their status.

It is also suggested that other studies are accomplished with the objective of verifying different students' lifestyle when compared to a group that won't take the college entrance exam. There can also be studies that will determine the influence of the lifestyle of students that just got accepted in a university.

The incentive to implant programs to educate Physical Activity and Health and to develop strategies to identify barriers for this kind of population, it should be one of the priorities concern of Physical Education professionals.

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Lifestyle profile of pre-college exam adolescents

Abstract: A good job opportunity is more and more related to education level. Millions of adolescents try to go to a university through college entrance exam. The preparatory period for these tests was stated that provokes alterations in students' lifestyle, and also with typical changes during adolescence can generate a stress condition. The objective of this research was to evaluate the lifestyle profile of a group of students from a preparatory test exam course from the Federal University of Santa Catarina. It was founded that the subjects presented a lifestyle profile considered as regular, with positive answers regarding preventive behavior and relationships, however, negative answers for physical activity, framing them as insufficiently active, irregular habits and high stress perception. So, the research concludes that the adolescents studied are in a preoccupying situation, for the fact that they are in a important phase to chose habits for their adult life; and also it was evidenced the need of incentives for the implantation of programs that would help in education for Physical Activity and Health.

Key-words: Adolescents, College entrance exam, Lifestyle.

Profile du style de vie dês étudiants qui se péparent pour le bac

Resume: Les opportunités d'emploi sont chaque fois plus liées au niveau scolaire de chacun. Ainsi, des millions d'adolescents essaient d'entrer à l'université par des concours d'admission tel que le baccalauréat. On estime que la période de préparation au baccalauréat provoque des changements dans le style de vie des élèves, et cela, ajouté aux transformations typiques de l'adolescence, peut devenir un facteur de stress parmi les jeunes. L'objectif de cette étude a été d'analyser le style de vie d'une classe d'élèves du cours préparatoire pour le baccalauréat de l'Université Fédérale de Santa Catarina. Résultats: les adolescents étudiés ont présenté un profile de style de vie considéré régulier, avec des réponses positives par rapport au comportement préventif et aux rapports sociaux. Cependant, la majorité d'entre eux a présenté des résultats négatifs par rapport aux activités physiques, les insérant dans la catégorie de personnes insuffisament actives, d'habitudes alimentaires irrégulières et de forte perception de stress pendant la période du cours préparatoire. Conclusions: le quadre constaté est préocupant car l'adolescence est une phase qui prédétermine les habitudes de la vie adulte, et, d'après ces analyses, nous voyons que des démarches pour l'implantation de programmes qui visent l'éducation dans le domaine de l'Activité Physique et de la Santé sont fondammentales.

Mots-clé: adolescents, baccalauréat, style de vie.

Perfil del estilo de vida de "pré-vestibulandos"

Resumen: Las posibilidades de conseguir un empleo están cada vez más relacionadas al nivel de escolaridad. En Brasil, en ese escenario, millones de adolescentes intentan ingresar en la universidad a través de una prueba llamada *vestibular*. Créese, que el periodo preparatorio para el *vestibular,* provoque alteraciones en el estilo de vida de los alumnos, y ese hecho, sumado a los cambios típicos de la adolescencia, puede generar una condición de stress. El objetivo del presente estudio ha sido evaluar el perfil del estilo de vida de un grupo de alumnos del curso preparatorio al vestibular de la Universidad Federal de Santa Catarina. Resultados: los adolescentes han presentado un perfil de estilo de vida considerado como regular, con respuestas positivas con relación al comportamiento preventivo y relacionamientos, sin embargo, con respuestas negativas en cuanto al nivel de actividad física, encuadrándose en la clasificación de insuficientemente activos, hábitos alimentarios irregulares y alta percepción de stress en el periodo pre *vestibular*. Conclusiones: el cuadro en que los adolescentes se encuentran es preocupante, por el hecho de la adolescencia ser una fase predeterminante para hábitos en la vida adulta, evidenciándose la necesidad del incentivo a la implantación de programas direccionados a la educación para la Actividad Física y la Salud.

Palabras-clave: adolescentes, vestibular, estilo de vida.

Perfil do estilo de vida de pré-vestibulandos

Resumo: As chances de se conseguir um emprego estão cada vez mais relacionadas ao nível de escolaridade. Nesse cenário, milhões de adolescentes tentam ingressar na universidade através do concurso vestibular. Acredita-se que o período preparatório para o vestibular provoque alterações no estilo de vida dos alunos, e esse fato, somado às mudanças típicas da adolescência pode gerar uma condição de estresse. O objetivo do presente estudo foi avaliar o perfil do estilo de vida de uma turma de alunos do cursinho pré-vestibular da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina. Resultados: os adolescentes estudados apresentaram um perfil de estilo de vida considerado como regular, com respostas positivas com relação ao comportamento preventivo e relacionamentos, entretanto, com respostas negativas quanto ao nível de atividade física, se enquadrando na classificação de insuficientemente ativos, hábitos alimentares irregulares e alta percepção de estresse no período pré-vestibular. Conclusões: o quadro em que os adolescentes se encontram é preocupante, pelo fato da adolescência ser uma fase pré-determinante para hábitos na vida adulta, evidenciando-se a necessidade do incentivo à implantação de programas que visem a educação para a Atividade Física e Saúde.

Palavras-chaves: adolescentes, vestibular, estilo de vida.