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Modern Life and Recreational Sports Participation: Challenges, Opportunities, and Solutions After Forty

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ABSTRACT:

This study aims to know and identify the challenges, opportunities and solutions facing the practice of recreational sports in light of the contemporary lifestyle among the group after the age of forty. The researchers used the descriptive analytical method for its suitability and the nature of the study, while the sample consisted of 38 people practicing recreational sports from the age group over 40 years, who selected intentionally, and the researchers adopted the questionnaire as a data collection tool. The latter distributed to the sample via social media, and the data was collected and processed statistically using SPSS 25. The results of the study showed that modern life has an impact on practicing sports after the age of forty, but there are challenges, opportunities, and solutions to promote recreational physical activity in this age group.

Keywords: modern life, recreational sports, age group over forty.

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1. Introduction:

In the midst of the pressures of contemporary life and the acceleration of technological advancements, many aspects have changed, including significant health challenges stemming from a sedentary lifestyle and increased weight. These challenges, faced by individuals of various age groups, especially those in the third age bracket, are attributable to the prevailing modern lifestyle, which heavily relies on sitting and technology use, coupled with unhealthy dietary habits. This has led many to suffer from chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes, and hypertension. Lack of time, psychological pressures, and hormonal changes are among the biggest obstacles preventing individuals from engaging in sports, often leading to feelings of boredom, fatigue, and exhaustion. The neglect of regular recreational sports participation has become evident in our society, despite its priority due to its benefits for overall individual health.

Recreational sports offer an effective solution to these health challenges, providing numerous physical, psychological, and social benefits to practitioners. Regular participation helps improve overall individual health, enhance various bodily functions, strengthen the immune system, prevent chronic diseases, and improve mental health by reducing stress and anxiety and promoting feelings of happiness and contentment.

Therefore, individuals must balance their commitments and responsibilities with allocating sufficient time for recreational sports to benefit from its many advantages for their overall health.

Based on the above, the research problem revolves around the following question:

Does modern life affect the practice of recreational sports for individuals over forty?

Sub-questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by individuals over forty that hinder their participation in recreational sports?
2. What opportunities are available to encourage recreational sports participation after the age of forty?
3. What are the most important solutions to overcome the challenges facing recreational sports participation after the age of forty?

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2. General Hypothesis:

Modern life has an impact on the practice of recreational sports for individuals over forty.

2.1. Sub-hypotheses:

1. There are several challenges facing individuals over forty that hinder their participation in recreational sports.
2. There are available opportunities that can be relied upon to encourage recreational sports participation after the age of forty.
3. There are practical solutions to overcome the challenges facing recreational sports participation after the age of forty.

3. Research Objectives:

1. To attempt to identify the challenges faced by individuals over forty that hinder their participation in recreational sports.
2. To attempt to identify the available opportunities that can be relied upon to encourage recreational sports participation after the age of forty.
3. To attempt to identify the most important practical solutions to overcome the challenges facing recreational sports participation after the age of forty.

4. Importance:

The Importance of this study lies in highlighting the challenges and opportunities available for recreational sports participation among the third age group, and the most important practical solutions available to overcome these challenges in light of modern lifestyles, such as lack of time, psychological pressures, and chronic diseases. It also discusses the benefits of recreational sports participation after the age of forty, such as improving general health, preventing chronic diseases, and promoting mental health.

5. Definition of Concepts and Terms

5.1. Recreational Sports:

Operational Definition: It is a form of physical sports activity practiced in leisure time for the purpose of enjoyment and improving general health. It is optional and varied according to the desire of the individual participant.

5.2. Modern Life:

Operational Definition: Modern life refers to the prevailing lifestyle at present, characterized by rapid changes in various aspects of life, including technology, economy, society, and culture.

5.3. Age Group Over Forty (Third Age Group):

Operational Definition: The third age group refers to a stage of life that typically begins after retirement age and is characterized by physical, psychological, and social changes, where signs of aging begin to appear, some individuals experience feelings of loneliness or depression, and their roles within the family change.

6. Previous and Similar Studies

6.1. Study by Al-Ansari et al. (2021) titled: "The Impact of Physical Activity on Quality of Life for the Elderly in the State of Qatar" (A Field Study)

This study aimed to identify the effect of sports participation on the quality of life among the elderly, monitor the challenges limiting their sports participation, and highlight some suitable physical activities for elderly Qatari citizens and residents. The researchers used a descriptive approach on a random sample including individuals aged 60 and above from Qatari citizens and residents. They relied on questionnaires as a data collection tool, and the study reached the following results:

- The study results revealed that regular daily exercise plays a significant role in the health of the elderly.
- However, the results showed that most elderly individuals in the sample do not regularly participate in sports.
- 30% of males exercise, while 24% of females do not.
- 26% of males desire to exercise, as do 33% of females, but they face some obstacles, primarily health conditions.

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- The results also showed that walking is the most popular sport among the elderly, with 89% of the sample, given that walking can be practiced anywhere and anytime.

6.2. Study by Gharbi and Sassi (2023) titled: "The Role and Implications of Recreational Physical Activity for the Elderly" (A Field Study at Boushaoui Amusement and Recreation Forest)

The current study aims to understand the role of recreational physical activity for the elderly, through the psychological and social implications resulting from their engagement in recreational physical activity. The study involved 20 elderly participants who exercise, and then aimed to identify the relationship between recreational physical activities and their implications for the elderly, as well as the importance of recreational activities. The results showed that recreational physical activity is an effective means of achieving emotional and mental balance and regaining self-confidence. It also alleviates depression, sadness, and loneliness, and helps elderly individuals integrate socially through comprehensive and coordinated recreational physical activities. It also assists in expanding their social sphere and fostering relationships through cooperation, improving mood, and increasing feelings of satisfaction.

6.3. Study by Benderraji and Mohoubi (2023) titled: "The Role of Recreational Physical Activity in Enhancing Life Satisfaction among the Elderly"

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of recreational physical activities in enhancing life satisfaction among the elderly, by examining the effect of proposed recreational physical activities on life satisfaction among the elderly. For this purpose, the researchers used a sample of 30 individuals, aged 65 to 70 years, 15 of whom were exercisers and the rest non-exercisers. The researchers used a descriptive approach and relied on Dr. Mohamed El-Dessouki's (1996) life satisfaction scale for data collection. After discussing and analyzing the results, it was concluded that engaging in recreational physical activities contributes to enhancing life satisfaction among the elderly. The study also found a positive role for recreational physical activity in improving the psychological and physical well-being of the elderly.

7. Research Methodology and Field Procedures:

7.1. Study Methodology:

The descriptive analytical approach was used due to its suitability to the nature of the study problem.

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7.2. Study Population and Sample:

7.2.1. Study Population:

The study population consists of all individuals who practice recreational sports and belong to the third age group (over forty) in Batna city.

7.2.2. Study Sample:

The research sample included 38 individuals practicing recreational sports from the 40-60 age group, selected using a purposive sampling method.

Sample Characteristics:

Table N°01: Distribution of Sample Individuals

Type of Recreational Sport Practiced				Age				Gender		Total
Team sports: football	swimming	Running	walking	60-56 years	55-51 years	50-46 years	45-40 years	female	male	
10	06	12	10	08	11	10	09	00	38	38
%26.31	15.78 %	31.57 %	26.31 %	21.05 %	28.94 %	26.31 %	23.68 %	00	%100	%100

Table N°01 shows the distribution of sample individuals by gender, age, and type of recreational sport practiced, as follows:

- **By Gender:** The number of male sample members was 38, representing 100%.
- **By Age:** The age group (51-55 years) had the largest percentage with 11 individuals (28.94%), while the age group (56-60 years) had the smallest percentage with 8 individuals (21.05%).
- **By Type of Recreational Sport Practiced:** Running was the most practiced sport with 12 individuals (31.57%), followed by walking and football with 10 individuals each (26.31%), and finally swimming with 6 practicing individuals (15.78%).

7.3. Data Collection Tools:

7.3.1. Questionnaire:

In our study, we used a questionnaire as a data collection tool. The researchers designed an electronic questionnaire consisting of three sections (challenges, opportunities, solutions), which was distributed to the sample via various social media platforms.

7.3.2. Psychometric Properties of Study Tools:

- **Validity and Reliability:**

To ensure the accuracy, validity, and objectivity of the questionnaire, we conducted a peer review by specialized sports professors. After the review, some questions were rephrased and modified.

To confirm the questionnaire's reliability, we distributed 09 questionnaire forms to individuals from the study population and outside the sample, then collected them and redistributed them to the same sample after 15 days. After calculating the alpha correlation coefficient between the results of the two tests, we found an alpha value of (0.95), which is statistically significant, indicating the reliability of the questionnaire.

As for validity, we calculated it through self-validity by calculating the square root of the alpha value, which equals (0.97), indicating the validity of the questionnaire.

7.6. Study Domains:

- a. Time Domain:** The study was conducted in the first quarter of 2024.
- b. Spatial Domain:** The study was conducted in Batna Province.
- c. Human Domain:** Individuals from the third age group (over 40 years old).

7.7. Statistical Methods Used:

Data was statistically processed using SPSS22 statistical software.

8. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results:

8.1. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results for the First Sub-Hypothesis:

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Which states: "There are several challenges facing individuals over forty that hinder their participation in recreational sports."

Table N°02: Challenges Faced by Individuals Over Forty in Recreational Sports Participation

No.	Statement	Options	Frequency	Percentage
01	Do you find it difficult to find time to exercise due to work and personal life pressures?	Yes	11	28.95%
		Sometimes	19	50%
		No	08	21.05%
02	Do you have sufficient information about the benefits of exercise on health after forty?	Yes	10	26.31%
		Insufficient	15	39.47%
		No	13	34.21%
03	Do you suffer from some health problems that sometimes prevent you from practicing recreational sports?	Yes	08	21.05%
		Sometimes	20	52.63%
		No	10	26.31%
04	Do you lack the desire and enthusiasm to exercise in your free time as you get older?	Yes	15	39.47%
		Sometimes	12	31.57%
		No	11	28.94%
05	Do you receive moral support from family or friends to exercise in your free time?	Yes	10	26.31%
		Sometimes	13	34.21%
		No	15	39.47%
06	Does your residential area have sports facilities for people over forty?	Yes	03	07.89%
		Insufficient	30	78.94%
		No	05	13.15%

From the questions presented in Table N°02 directed to the sample and their responses, frequencies and percentages were calculated for all statements in the "Challenges" section that face the sample and hinder their recreational sports participation. The results indicated that statement six, "Does your residential area have sports facilities for people over forty?", is the most important statement, receiving the highest percentage (78.94%), which showed, according to the sample's opinion, that the facilities available in their residential areas are insufficient for practicing recreational sports suitable for their age. This is followed by statement number three, "Do you suffer from some health problems that sometimes prevent you from practicing recreational sports?", with a percentage of (52.63%), which also indicated that the health problems of the sample individuals often prevent them from practicing recreational sports.

The results of most statements in this section also indicated that the presented challenges affect recreational sports participation for individuals over forty. The researchers attribute these results to a lack of awareness of the benefits

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of recreational sports, their lack of knowledge on how to start exercising, in addition to the difficulty of finding suitable time to exercise due to work or family commitments. Other challenges include some individuals in this group lacking the motivation to exercise, especially if they are not used to it, along with weak moral social support from family and friends. Furthermore, health problems prevent them from exercising without prior medical consultation, coupled with insufficient or unaffordable sports facilities in some areas.

The current study's results are consistent with the results of Al-Ansari et al.'s (2021) study, which found that 26% of males desire to exercise, as do 33% of females, but they face some obstacles, primarily health conditions.

8.2. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results for the Second Sub-Hypothesis:

Which states that: "There are available opportunities that can be relied upon to encourage recreational sports participation after the age of forty."

Table N°03: Opportunities to Encourage Recreational Sports Participation After Forty

No.	Statement	Options	Frequency	Percentage
01	Do various media outlets play an important role in increasing your awareness of the importance of exercise after forty?	Yes	20	52.63%
		Sometimes	13	34.21%
		No	05	13.15%
02	Do you think there is a need to design special recreational sports programs for the over forty age group?	Yes	25	65.78%
		Insufficient	10	26.31%
		No	03	7.89%
03	Do you think organizing sports courses at work encourages you to exercise regularly in your free time?	Yes	16	42.10%
		Sometimes	14	36.84%
		No	08	21.05%
04	Do you think exercising with family and friends makes you happy and strengthens social bonds among you?	Yes	31	81.57%
		Sometimes	07	18.42%
		No	00	00
05	Does the provision of suitable sports facilities in neighborhoods and residential complexes encourage exercise for the over forty age group?	Yes	29	76.31%
		Sometimes	08	21.05%
		No	01	2.63%
06		Yes	18	47.36%

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	Do you think that if the cost of sports programs is reasonable and affordable, it will encourage you to practice recreational sports after forty?	Insufficient	15	39.47%
		No	05	13.15%

From the questions presented in Table N°03 directed to the sample and their responses, frequencies and percentages were calculated for all statements in the "Opportunities" section that the sample individuals can rely on to encourage their recreational sports participation. The results indicated that statement four, "Do you think exercising with family and friends makes you happy and strengthens social bonds among you?", is the most important statement, receiving the highest percentage (81.57%), which showed, according to the sample's opinion, that exercising with family and friends makes them happy and comfortable and encourages them to exercise. This is followed by statement number five, "Does the provision of suitable sports facilities in neighborhoods and residential complexes encourage exercise for the over forty age group?", with a percentage of (76.31%), which also indicated that providing suitable sports facilities in neighborhoods and residential complexes motivates them to exercise in their free time.

The results of all statements in this section also indicated that the presented opportunities encourage individuals over forty to practice recreational sports. The researchers attribute these results to the sample individuals' awareness of the importance of encouragement and motivation needed to help them start exercising in their free time, especially at their age. This can only be achieved through the individual's personal will as a first condition, in addition to the role played by media in organizing awareness sessions about the benefits of sports for physical and mental health after forty, and providing advice from specialists on how to exercise safely and effectively while highlighting its enjoyment and ease at this age, and also how to make exercise a healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, the sample individuals' need for diverse sports activity programs that suit their various needs and tastes, with affordable costs for everyone, encourages them to exercise with family or friends to enhance social bonding among them. Another important point in encouraging them to practice recreational sports regularly is organizing internal sports tournaments among employees at work or external ones with various departments participating in sports events. Additionally, providing dedicated spaces for exercising in workplaces and residential complexes, which should be safe and suitable for individuals in this age group, is crucial.

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The current study's results are consistent with the results of Gharbi and Sassi's (2023) study, which found that most elderly individuals under study receive encouragement and support from those around them to engage in recreational physical activity. Furthermore, sports effectively contribute to their mental health by regaining self-confidence and improving their self-perception, in addition to alleviating stress, psychological pressure, and depression due to various life problems.

It also aligns with the results of Benderraji and Mohoubi's (2023) study, which found that engaging in physical activities significantly contributes to enhancing life satisfaction among the elderly at all levels, including happiness, psychological stability, and tranquility.

8.3. Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion of Results for the Third Sub-Hypothesis:

Which states that: "There are practical solutions to overcome the challenges facing recreational sports participation after the age of forty."

**Table N°04: Solutions to Overcome Challenges in Recreational Sports
Participation After Forty**

No.	Statement	Options	Frequency	Percentage
01	Do you think it is possible to overcome the lack of time for exercise after forty through good planning and prioritizing it?	Agree	25	65.78%
		Neutral	13	34.21%
		Disagree	00	00
02	Do you think motivation for exercise after forty can be restored by finding diverse and enjoyable sports activities?	Agree	18	47.36%
		Neutral	17	44.73%
		Disagree	03	7.89%
03	Do you think exercising after forty can improve general health and quality of life?	Agree	30	78.94%
		Neutral	08	21.05%
		Disagree	00	00
04	Do you think encouraging people over forty to exercise will be achieved by providing suitable sports facilities and diverse sports programs near their homes?	Agree	35	92.1%
		Neutral	03	7.89%
		Disagree	00	00
05	Do you think physical fitness after forty can be maintained through regular exercise, even for short periods?	Agree	28	73.68%
		Neutral	04	10.33%
		Disagree	06	15.78%
06		Agree	26	68.42%

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	Do you think there are practical solutions to overcome the health challenges that may face exercise after forty?	Neutral	12	31.57%
		Disagree	00	00
07	I am not afraid of injury if I exercise after forty in suitable facilities.	Agree	26	68.42%
		Neutral	10	26.31%
		Disagree	02	5.26%
08	I would be more willing to exercise after forty if I received support and help from family and friends.	Agree	21	55.26%
		Neutral	12	31.57%
		Disagree	05	13.15%

From the questions presented in Table N°04 directed to the sample and their responses, frequencies and percentages were calculated for all statements in the "Solutions" section that the sample individuals can rely on to overcome the challenges they face in recreational sports participation. The results indicated that statement four, "Do you think encouraging people over forty to exercise will be achieved by providing suitable sports facilities and diverse sports programs near their homes?", is the most important statement, receiving the highest percentage (92.01%), which showed, according to the sample's opinion, that providing suitable sports facilities for their age near their homes encourages them to exercise, along with, of course, providing diverse and specialized programs for them. This is followed by statement number three, "Do you think exercising after forty can improve general health and quality of life?", with a percentage of (78.94%), which also indicated that exercising for this group improves their health and quality of life.

The results of all statements in this section also indicated that the presented solutions help overcome the challenges faced by individuals over forty in recreational sports participation. The researchers attribute these results to the sample individuals' awareness of these challenges and the necessity of overcoming them by dedicating at least 30 minutes to exercise in their daily routine, even if only three days a week. It is also preferable to look for free or low-cost sports programs and practice them with family or friends to make it more enjoyable and help with commitment. Moreover, it is advisable to join sports groups that provide a positive environment and an opportunity to meet new people.

The current study's results are consistent with the results of Gharbi and Sassi's (2023) study, which found that most elderly individuals under study enjoy group recreational physical activity, which opened the door for their integration and helped them overcome loneliness and emptiness, prompting them to establish new relationships on a wide scale.

9. Conclusion:

In conclusion of this study, we emphasize the importance of recreational sports participation in modern life for the third age group, due to its benefits for general health and good quality of life. Despite some challenges hindering its practice, there are, on the other hand, many opportunities and solutions that make it worth the effort. With some willpower and planning, a way can be found to make it an enjoyable and beneficial part of the lives of individuals over forty. Among these solutions are:

- **Overcoming lack of time:** Utilize lost time for recreational sports.
- **Overcoming lack of social support:** Talk to family and friends about the importance of recreational sports.
- **Overcoming lack of awareness:** Enhance knowledge about the benefits of sports from online sources, books, and magazines.
- **Consulting a doctor:** If necessary, seek advice on safe and effective exercise.
- **Overcoming lack of resources:** Practice outdoor sports such as walking, running, or cycling.
- **Overcoming cultural beliefs:** Share success stories of individuals exercising after forty, which can inspire others.

10. Recommendations:

- Encourage individuals over forty to participate in recreational sports regularly.
- Develop recreational sports programs specifically designed for individuals over forty.
- Support recreational sports participation in the workplace.
- Encourage recreational sports participation with family and friends.
- Provide suitable sports facilities in neighborhoods and residential complexes.

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