

## Counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients

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### Abstract

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to seek for information, opinions and attitudes of the respondents and it is carried out in Anambra state of Nigeria. A total number of 143 counsellors who are willing to participate in the study are selected through accidental sampling technique. The instrument 'perceived counsellors' health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients (PCSHPBSFEPWBOCS) developed by the researchers based on the information from the literature reviewed is used for data collections through direct approach distribution. This instrument is validated by three experts. Test re-test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected are analyzed through the use of statistical weighted mean and ranking. Any mean score that is below 2.50 is accepted while any one below a mean score of 2.50 is rejected. The study revealed the following health promoting behaviours: engaging in daily exercise, taking healthy diet, minimizing hazards in the home and workplace, practicing effective hygiene, consumption of limited alcohol and tobacco, having adequate sleep and rest, little intake of salt, sugar and processed foods, adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air having relaxed mind and maintaining a healthy body weight. The researchers recommend that Government should provide funds in support of the counsellors to educating and training people on promoting healthy behaviours that can enhance their physical well-being. Also, counsellors should increase the awareness on the adoption of these health promoting behaviours through the use of media and public announcements.

Key words: counsellors, health, promoting, behaviours and well-being.

Key words: counsellors, health, promoting, behaviours and well-being. **Introduction**

Counselling is seen as a professional advice and guidance given to a person who is a client or counsellee by another person who is an expert in the field of guidance and counselling known as a counsellor in order to help the counsellee or client who has issues to explore, discover and clarify ways of living more positively, satisfactorily and resourcefully in his environment. Counselling involves relationship between two persons in which one of them (counsellor) attempts to assist the other (counsellee or client) towards organizing himself as to attain a particular form of happiness, adjusting to a life situation and also attain self-actualization (Jobin 2010). Egwim & Iwuama (2019) also, opine that counselling is the ability of a trained and experienced counsellor to provide information for the counsellee which he uses to overcome his challenges. Though the counsellor does not overcome the challenges for him but he helps him to make informed decisions both now and in future towards solving and preventing such challenges in future.

Guidance counsellors in the cause of carrying out their services engage different types of clients with diverse problems in the communities such as depression, stress, difficulty in moving around and weakness bordering their lives and how far they have used medication but it persists. The authors are of the opinion that in line with the medical attention a person seeks whenever sickness occurs, that guidance counsellors can equally help towards providing some health behavioural tips that can bring about a positive change capable of improving the quality of life of the clients. One cannot talk of improving quality of life without reference to having good physical health and also suggesting some health promoting behaviours that can enhance in achieving that is paramount.

Health, according to the World Health Organization, is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease and infirmity (Jobin 2010). For Stacy-Sampson and Adam (2020), health is referred to as a state of complete emotional and physical well-being. Also, Marie (2021) sees health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not the absence of illness or infirmity. However, physical well-being on the other hand involves pursuing a healthful lifestyle to decrease the risk of disease (Bansal, Chaudhary, Soni, Sharma, Gupta, Kaushal 2015). Physical well-being is the ability to maintain a healthy quality of life that allows one to get the most out of his daily activities without undue fatigue or physical stress Anu (2018). Physical well-being is important because it enables everything else. It is central to handling stress and living a longer and more active life. Research has shown that physical well-being has an impact on conditions such as anxiety, depression and on the stress tolerance and cognitive agility (Marie 2021). Having physical well-being is so important that without it, mental well-being of an individual may not function aright. It can affect the way a person relates with others, attends to his career and finances negatively. This implies that the person will always be distracted by his health and as a result cannot be able to take charge of his own life and activities fully. Therefore, the importance of good health cannot be over-ruled and good health is what everybody is craving for. Mohaddesi; Razavi; Khalkhali; Bahadori and Saeigharenaz (2016) in their article, emphasize that good health improves an individual's overall health, both physical and mental, enhances people's quality of life, increases energy and self-esteem and reduces stress for people while Richards, Hillsdon, Thorogood and Foster (2013) add that good health prevents diseases, premature death and reduces healthcare costs. The best way to maintain health is to preserve it through a healthful lifestyle rather than waiting until sickness or infirmity comes to address health problems (Bansal, Chaudhary, Soni, Sharma, Gupta & Kaushal 2015). People use the name wellness to describe this continuous state of enhanced well-being. Counsellors are known for disseminating vital information for the welfare of their clients no matter the field the client comes from. Therefore, such vital information especially on enhancing physical health is about making more noticeable or prominent a healthful lifestyles behaviours or life habits that can help people live a full life with meaning and purpose. Health behaviours or habits according to the present authors can be seen as the positive ways people can live and things they can do that are capable of affecting their physical wellbeing positively. On the likely health promoting habits, Enjazab; Farajzadegan; Taleghani; Aflatoonian and Morowatisharifabad (2012) suggest that engaging in daily exercise, maintaining a healthy body weight and taking healthy diet can likely slow the rate at which some people fall sick there by enhancing their physical well-being. Bansal, Chaudhary, Soni, Sharma, Gupta and Kaushal (2015) opionate that people with relaxed mind and who engage in adequate sleep and sufficient rest may hardly suffer anxiety and depression while Egwim and Iwuama, (2019) advocates that some people who do not smoke or use other tobacco products enjoy healthy life than those that engage in using them. Also, individuals that take limited alcohol consumption, salt, sugar, and processed foods, adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air hardly fall sick (Marie 2021). Furthermore, Richards, Hillsdon, Thorogood, and Foster (2013) and Stacy-Sampson & Adam, (2020) affirm that environmental factors such as where a person lives, the state of the surrounding environment, genetics, their income and level of education do impact health of people while environmental factors like pollution, toxic chemicals, germs, cold and damp can all impair one's physical well-being. Having physical health and well-being also involves reducing the risk of an injury or health issue, such as: minimizing hazards in the workplace, using contraception when having sex and practicing effective hygiene (Mohaddesi, Razavi, Khalkhali, Bahadori & Saeigharenaz 2016). According to some studies, the higher a person's socioeconomic status, the more likely they are to enjoy good health, have a good education, get a well-paid job, and afford good healthcare in times of illness or injury (Alkhaldeh 2014). This implies that people with low socio-economic status are more likely to experience stress due to daily living, such as financial difficulties, sickness, marital disruption, and unemployment. Based on the fact that every person whether rich or poor needs physical well-being, the present researchers deems it right to carry out this study 'Counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients'.

### **Statement of the problem**

Nowadays, cost of living is too high to the extent that some families hardly provide three square meals for their children how much more when a member of them falls sick. People spend a lot of money to cure diseases and maintain their health in order to stay healthy. The rich and the wealthy can easily provide for such

expenses but the population that suffers it most is the poor people who could not provide the money except through borrowing. For an example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that healthcare costs in the United States were \$3.5 trillion in 2017 (Stancy-Stancy & Adam 2020). Since it is so in the developed country, think of what the cost would be in the third countries of the world of which Nigeria is involve. This contributes to the death of some people because of their inability to pay in order to access health care services. Having good health is about accentuating the positive good behaviours thereby eliminating the negative ones. Dhiman & Chawla (2017) opine that health behaviours are very important because they help in preventing many injuries or illnesses and may equally lessen the impact of others. Therefore, it is better for counsellors to guide people towards embracing good health behaviours that can help them remain healthy. It seems better for people to imbibe natural health promoting behaviours that will help them in keeping fit and also in slowing diseases from affecting them since such activities appear to be cost effective. This is because good physical health leads to better mental and emotional well-being. Hence, the need to determine Counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients.

### Research Question

The following research question guides the study:

1. What are the counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients?

### Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive survey design to seek for information, opinions and attitudes of the respondents and it is carried out in Anambra state of Nigeria. A total number of 143 counsellors who are willing to participate in the study are selected through accidental sampling technique at their meeting days. The instrument 'perceived counsellors' health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients (PCSHPBSFEPWBOCS) developed by the researchers based on the information from the literature reviewed is used for data collections through direct approach distribution. This instrument is validated by three experts. Test re-test was used to establish the reliability of the instrument and the reliability coefficient of 0.76 was obtained. The data collected are analyzed through the use of statistical weighted mean and ranking. Any mean score that was below 2.50 was accepted while any one below a mean score of 2.50 was rejected.

### Results

Research Question: What are the counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients?

The data obtained from the above is analyzed and presented in the table below:

Mean scores of counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients

| S/N | Item Description                                 | Mean | Remark   | Ranking         |
|-----|--|------|----------|-----------------|
| 1.  | Engaging in daily exercise                       | 3.48 | Accepted | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 2.  | Taking healthy diet                              | 3.32 | Accepted | 7 <sup>th</sup> |
| 3.  | Minimizing hazards in the home and workplace     | 3.52 | Accepted | 1 <sup>st</sup> |
| 4.  | Practicing effective hygiene                     | 3.40 | Accepted | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| 5.  | Consumption of limited alcohol and tobacco       | 3.34 | Accepted | 6 <sup>th</sup> |
| 6.  | Adequate sleep and rest                          | 3.48 | Accepted | 2 <sup>nd</sup> |
| 7.  | Little intake of salt, sugar and processed foods | 3.40 | Accepted | 4 <sup>th</sup> |
| 8.  | Adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air       | 3.35 | Accepted | 5 <sup>th</sup> |
| 9.  | Having relaxed mind                              | 3.41 | Accepted | 3 <sup>rd</sup> |

### Summary of the Findings

In the views of the guidance counsellors, the health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients' means and their rankings are as follows: engaging in daily exercise and adequate sleep and rest have mean values of 3.43 each and ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, taking healthy diet and maintaining a healthy body weight have means of 3.32 each and was 7<sup>th</sup> in position respectively, minimizing hazards in the home and workplace has a mean value of 3.52 which came 1<sup>st</sup> in ranking, practicing effective hygiene and little intake of salt, sugar and processed foods have mean values of 3.40 respectively and each came 4<sup>th</sup> in ranking. Also, consumption of limited alcohol and tobacco substances has a mean value of 3.34 and came 6<sup>th</sup> in ranking while having relaxed mind have the mean value of 3.41 which came 3<sup>rd</sup> in ranking. The last but not the least is adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air. It scored the mean value of 3.35 and came 5<sup>th</sup> position in ranking.

### Discussion of the findings

The findings of this study are discussed based on the research question. The study on counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients revealed the following health promoting behaviours: engaging in daily exercise, taking healthy diet, minimizing hazards in the home and workplace, practicing effective hygiene, consumption of limited alcohol and tobacco, having adequate sleep and rest, little intake of salt, sugar and processed foods, adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air having relaxed mind and maintaining a healthy body weight. These findings were in line with the assertion of Enjezab; Farajzadegan; Taleghani; Aflatoonian and Morowatisharifabad (2012) who stated that engaging in daily exercise, maintaining a healthy body weight and taking healthy diet may slow the rate at which some people fall sick there by enhancing their physical well-being. Some part of the findings also gave support to the findings of Bansal, Chaudhary, Soni, et al (2015) that people with relaxed mind and who engaged in adequate sleep and sufficient rest can hardly suffer anxiety and depression. The study equally agreed with that of Egwim and Iwuama, (2019) who stated that some people who do not smoke or use other tobacco products enjoy healthy life than those that engage in using them. Furthermore, the findings of this study collaborates with the findings of Marie (2021) and Stacy-Sampson & Adam, (2020) that people who take limited salt, sugar, and processed foods, adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air hardly fall sick.

### Conclusion

The findings of this study provided a number of insights into the counsellors' perceived health promoting behaviours for enhancing physical well-being of clients which includes: engaging in daily exercise, taking healthy diet, minimizing hazards in the home and workplace, practicing effective hygiene, consumption of limited alcohol and tobacco, having adequate sleep and rest, little intake of salt, sugar and processed foods, adequate hydration, sunlight and fresh air, having relaxed mind and maintaining a healthy body weight.

### Recommendations

The researchers recommend the following:

Government should provide funds in support of the counsellors in educating and training people on promoting healthy behaviours that enhance physical well-being.

Government should increase the awareness on the value of being healthy through the use of media and public announcements.

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