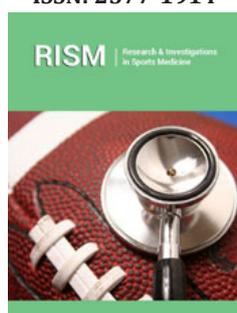


Tooling the Running Movement for the Improvement of Public Health: An Opinion

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Opinion

According to the World Health Organization, the world's most fatal diseases' rates refer to cardiovascular diseases and strokes caused mainly by high blood pressure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease along with lung and upper respiratory tract cancer, and diabetes mellitus. Of the total deaths of 57 million for 2018, the first four causes of death are about 22 million. Furthermore, as the fourth risk factor for global mortality mentioned is physical inactivity.

Patients with chronic diseases such as some of the aforementioned are benefiting from the medical care and hospitalization by the state health social services, as well as by private health and/or private insurance health sector. Healthcare, as a practice of improving public health, in many cases has a fairly high cost, which is constantly rising and is expected to reach \$15 trillion worldwide in 2050.

On the other hand, physical activity and exercise with emphasis on moderate and moderate to high-intensity aerobic exercise on a systematic basis is a factor reducing the risk of mortality from these diseases. As the simplest form of aerobic exercise, running is a particularly popular leisure-time physical activity that is highly developed, which is world-famous as a movement. This particular physical activity does not require specialized and expensive equipment, can be implemented in any sport or public space at any time and is not subject to restrictions of social characteristics such as gender, age, socio-economic status, etc.

A plethora of scientific research results have demonstrated that running as a physical leisure activity can be a risk-reducing factor for a multitude of the aforementioned diseases. More specific studies have shown that this type of exercise, if performed on a systematic basis, can reduce the relative risk of cardiovascular diseases mortality, various types of cancer, strokes, help regulate glucose and high blood pressure levels, prevent and/or reduce the consumption of tobacco products resulting in a reduction in the incidence of pulmonary diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and lung cancer, while helping to regulate body weight and reduce the incidence of metabolic syndrome.

The continued spread of the running movement, characterized by the massive popular participation, the increased numbers of running events in different terrains such as the public road, the trail road, the mountain road as well as the classic running in the stadium, represents a first-class opportunity for state institutions to plan, organize and promote policies and practices in order to contribute to the expansion of the specific physical activity. This particular social policy could be a factor in improving public health, with a particularly beneficial effect on the reduction of the mortality rates from the aforementioned diseases.

The overall benefit will concern the best health levels of citizens, the expansion of quality and healthy living time in relation to their life expectancy, and their physical, psychological and social well-being. The benefit to national economies will be to reduce the cost of medical care for a significant proportion of long-term patients and to reduce the mortality rate for the active workforce and in the reproductive age population.

The running movement is a proven social movement with deep roots in social post material values that affect the physical fitness and health of the participants and, consequently, their

physical and social well-being. Exploiting the momentum on behalf of the state's health and sports institutions provides a unique opportunity, as the cost of developing policies and programs to help maintain citizens' interest in simpler physical activity, running, is very small in the face of profits which will be gained by both citizens and states.

In conclusion, the fight against physical inactivity and as a result of the top mortality risk factors worldwide should be an urgent public health priority for all health and sports government

institutions. The running movement as a social movement that has its base in post-materialistic values, is an important tool through which if exploited properly by state institutions will achieve significant results in the improvement and promotion of public health [1].

References

1. World Health Organization (2018) The top 10 causes of death, Geneva, Switzerland.

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