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TIME SUBMITTED	20-APR-2016 07:32PM	WORD COUNT	699
SUBMISSION ID	56146194	CHARACTER COUNT	3616



Barriers to Exercise

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Introduction

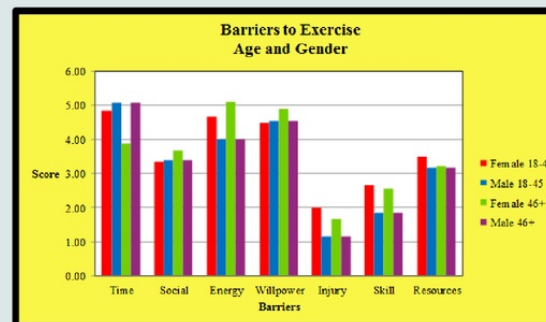
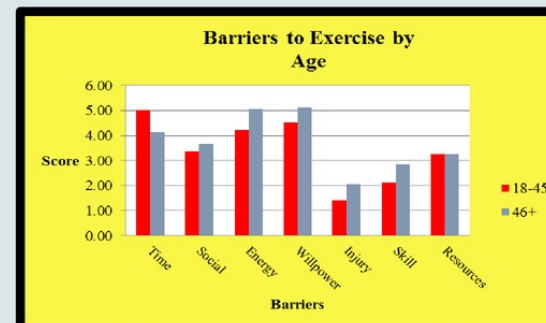
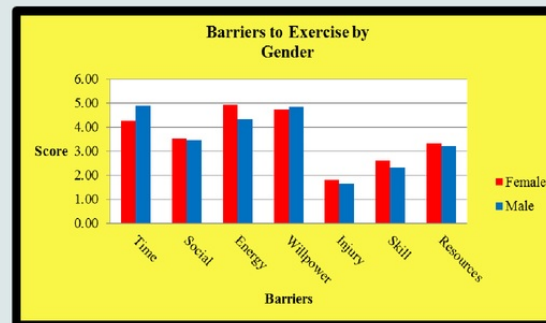
The benefits of exercise are well established in relation to health and wellbeing and it is reasonable to assume the majority of adults have an understanding of the importance of staying physically active. Yet for some this is not the case. Physical inactivity has been described as the silent killer and inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (NHS choices 2016). In the UK the cost of inactivity related health conditions to the NHS is £1.06 billion annually. The UK Government recommends, adults aged 19-64yrs carry out 150 minutes of physical activity per week yet in Wales only 36% of men and 23% of woman achieve this National Statistics (2015)

Objectives

While accepting that there is a role for education and healthy activity promotion, the research considered established barriers to exercise (NHS choices 2016) amongst a group of retail workers. The study took into account both age and gender to compare and contrast their potential reasons for not exercising. This could have implications for the future because of the rising retirement age and therefore potential benefits to employers of increased physical activity of their workforce, through improved productivity and a reduction in absenteeism.

Method

After gaining ethical approval to conduct the research. A total of 34 participants (male n=19, female n=15) who were all employed at B&Q as retail shop workers in two outlets in west Wales took part. The managers of the B&Q stores were visited to gain permission and to explain the process and that it would not be detrimental in any way to their business. Data was collected using the questionnaire 'Barriers to being active' produced by USA Government Department of Health and Human Services, Centre for Disease and Prevention. This particular questionnaire was selected as it was relatively easy to complete and accepts people have barriers to exercise and does not appear judgemental if participants do not exercise.



Results

Results were collated using Microsoft Excel and analysed using SPSS Mann-Whitney U test and found no statistical differences between age and gender and barriers to exercise.

The main barriers to exercise were identified as: **Lack of time**, **Lack of energy**, and **Lack of willpower**. These findings were consistent with current academic research, NHS choices (2016). Due to the demographic of the respondents the age categories were compiled into two groups, 18-45 years and 46 years+ the categories which had the largest number of respondents were category 36-45 years with 12 and category 46+ with 15. This may reflect B&Q policy of employing more mature staff or may represent a long serving ageing workforce. Lack of time was the barrier which male respondents cited as the reason for being inactive whereas females claimed lack of energy. Older respondents aged 46+ were found to have more time but lacked energy and willpower.

Conclusion

The survey identified a range of personal, physical and logistical barriers relating to physical exercise. The findings of the research support current literature. CDC (2016). While the research analyses and tabulates the results it is clear that barriers to exercise are unique to each person. Future research could focus on workplace intervention or initiatives to increase physical activity, and to investigate the potential benefit to employers and employees of a more healthy and active workforce. Future work could also consider the question of the employee taking responsibility for their own health as they may have to work longer due to changes in retirement age. B&Q has an ageing workforce comparable to the UK demographic (National Statistics 2015) this coupled with changes to the pension age means that people will have to work longer. It is estimated that people in their early twenties in 2016 will need to work until they are seventy before qualifying for the state pension and by 2064 the state pension retirement age will be seventy five, Swinford (2016).

References

- CDC, Centers for Disease, Control and Prevention 2016
- The National Archive. Office for National Statistics 2015
- Swinford, S. (2016) 'Work until your 75 or even 81 - under Government review of state pension age' The Telegraph, 2 March.