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EDITORIAL

# The National Health Status and Exercises

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The medal table of the Rio Olympics 2016 shows United States at the top[1] by securing 121 medals. United States was represented by 558 athletes. The majority of the top nations on the Olympic table are well developed countries which have optimum facilities for the exercises and physical activities. These countries have legislation in place which aim to promote and facilitate sports and exercises. Despite of the fact that Pakistan is the 5th populous country in the world, did not qualify for any medal in the last two decades and has poor image since 1947 in this arena. Unfortunately, Olympics games in Pakistan are merely considered as sporting events and source of entertainment, while health benefits as a pretext of national fitness are poorly understood.

The majority of events in Olympics games are based on the aerobic exercise abilities. The events include, but not limited to, various kinds of sports where endurance, speed, accuracy and general fitness are rewarded in the form of medals. The vast majority of the athletes train for several years before they could qualify for a place in the Olympic squad. Thousands of other disqualify during the screening for each particular sports through various kind of national competitions. And many hundreds of thousands other opt for amateur role and adapt to the sporting activity as pretext to keep themselves fit.

Pakistan squad in Olympic 2016 was composed of 7 athletes- 4 men and 3 women and had more officials than athletes.[1] The desperate situation of Pakistan participation in the Olympics, unfortunately reflects the poor fitness status of national health.

According to a national survey 1990-1994([2]) and the following reports, 33% of the population in Pakistan above the age 45 and 19% above the age 15 are suffering from hypertension. And around 25% of people over the age of 45 suffer from Diabetes. Over all prevalence of diabetes in urban and rural areas is estimated around 28.3% and 25.3%, respectively.[3] Currently Pakistan is ranked 6th worldwide in relation to the prevalence of diabetes and the figures are estimated to rise to 13 million patient in 2020, making Pakistan the 4th largest diabetic population worldwide. Around 350,000 people suffer from stroke every year. Heart diseases related deaths are estimated around 200,000 (30-40%) per years. Obesity is estimated 9% and 14% in men and women respectively in rural area of Pakistan. Urban areas have the prevalence of obesity of 22% in men and 37% in women for the obvious reasons. These statistics have reached to an epidemic level and needs emergency measures.

The major risk factors of the high blood pressure, diabetes, cardiac diseases and obesity are identified as sedentary lifestyle and physical inactivity.[4-6] The World Health Organization's estimates reveals 1.9 million deaths take place per year due to physical inactivity on a global level. In addition, 22% of heart related disease and 10-16% of breast cancers, colon cancer and diabetes are the results of the physical inactivity. WHO further estimates that inadequate physical activity in the developing countries range from 17 to 91% and 4-84% in the developing world.[7]

Conversely, regular exercises play an important role in the reduction of the risk of cardiovascular diseases, diabetes[8], osteoarthritis, respiratory illnesses and hospital stay after admissions.[9-11] Unfortunately, the population in Pakistan with respect to social status and lifestyle is

diverse and accurate statistics with respect to exercise social class cannot be estimated.

"Exercise is the best medicine" and is one of the basic needs of health and wellbeing. The health professionals are therefore urged to prescribe more and more exercises and educate their patients regarding the benefits of exercise. The government authorities should optimize facility for sports and exercises on each level and department. Non-government voluntary organization, electronic media and trusts need to launch campaigns to promote physical activity in order to educate the general population in relation to the greater health benefits of the exercises.

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