

Special Issue

Physical Activity for Mental Health: The Diverse Evidence and New Avenues

Message from the Guest Editors

Previous research has demonstrated varied psychological benefits of physical activity participation; however, more diverse evidence is needed to better understand the role participating in physical activity plays in the promotion of mental wellbeing and the prevention of mental illness in diverse populations (e.g., patients, athletes, schoolchildren and adolescents, adults at varying ages, people with neurodiversity or special needs, etc.). Moreover, knowledge is needed regarding the biopsychosocial factors that may modulate the mental health consequences of participation in physical activity, especially among those who are engaging in varied high-intensity and high-volume physical activities (e.g., elite athletes, blue-collar workers) or those with special needs (e.g., the neurodiverse or other vulnerable individuals). In this context, we argue that participation in physical activity may not always be equally beneficial to all people at times, and could be debilitating to mental health (e.g., reinforcing obsession, muscle dysmorphia, eating problems, etc.). Meanwhile, the varied types and contexts of physical activity may also exert different influences on different people.

Guest Editors

Dr. Jingdong Liu

Department of Physical Education, Sun Yat-Sen University, Guangzhou 510275, China

Dr. Shuge Zhang

1. School of Human Sciences Department, College of Science and Engineering, University of Derby, Derby DE22 3AW, UK

2. College of Physical Education, Hunan University of Technology, Zhuzhou 412007, China

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Editorial Office
MDPI, Grosspeteranlage 5
4052 Basel, Switzerland
Tel: +41 61 683 77 34
behavsci@mdpi.com

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Prof. Dr. Jerrell Cassady

Department of Educational Psychology, Ball State University, Muncie, IN 47306, USA

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