

The Effect of Mamanet Cachibol League on Psychosomatic Symptoms, Eating Habits, and Social Support among Arab Women: A Mixed Methods Study

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Abstract : Introduction: The Mamanet Cachibol League (MCL) is a community-based model developed in Israel to promote physical activity (PA) and amateur team sports among women. team sports are not just groups in the context of specific sport activity but also incorporated into a person's sense of self and become influencing factor on sport-related behavior among the players. While in the non-Arabic sector, sport venues are available for the local authority population, the Arabic sector authorities face limited access sport facilities, with 168 sport venues and authorities with no venues at all. Within the Arab community, women participation in sports has traditionally been limited and, even more so for participation in team sports. Aims: The purpose of the study was to explore attributes of women MCL activity via: (1) assess differences between participants in the MCL and non-participants among Arab women regarding well-being level; (2) to examine among MCL participants the relationship between health maintenance characteristics and the likelihood of participating in the MCL; and (3) Use qualitative approach to shed light over the question why Arabic women participate in MCL and continue their engagement in PA. Methods: An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was employed to gain a deeper understanding of the advantages and motivations among women participating in community-based team sports. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among Israeli Arab women aged 25-59. Demographic characteristics, well-being (SRH and psychosomatic symptoms), eating habits, and social support were analyzed using two-way analyses of covariance and multiple regression models with a sequential entry of the variables. Quantitative results were further explored in qualitative in-depth interviews among 30 of the MCL participants, which shed light on additional reasons for participation in PA. Results: MCL participants reported better self-reported health ($p < 0.001$) and lower rates of psychosomatic symptoms ($p < 0.001$) compared to non-participants. Participation in MCL was also related to higher levels of well-being and healthy eating habits. Women who participated also experienced a profound sense of belonging, leading to enhanced social interactions and positivity in their personal and professional lives. They were dedicated to the group and felt empowered by the reciprocal commitment. The group promoted equality, making the women feel valued and respected, resulting in community admiration. Their involvement positively impacted their families, justifying their time commitment.

Keywords : wellbeing, obesity, community based sports, healthy eating habits, arab women

Conference Title : ICPPW 2024 : International Conference on Positive Psychology and Wellbeing

Conference Location : Bangkok, Thailand

Conference Dates : January 15-16, 2024