

Health and Performance Fitness Assessment of Adolescents in Middle Income Schools in Lagos State

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Abstract : The testing and assessment of physical fitness of school-aged adolescents in Nigeria has been going on for several decades. Originally, these tests strictly focused on identifying health and physical fitness status and comparing the results of adolescents with others. There is a considerable interest in health and performance fitness of adolescents in which results attained are compared with criteria representing positive health rather than simply on score comparisons with others. Despite the fact that physical education program is being studied in secondary schools and physical activities are encouraged, it is observed that regular assessment of students' fitness level and health status seems to be scarce or not being done in these schools. The purpose of the study was to assess the health and performance fitness of adolescents in middle-income schools in Lagos State. A total number of 150 students were selected using the simple random sampling technique. Participants were measured on hand grip strength, sit-up, pacer 20 meter shuttle run, standing long jump, weight and height. The data collected were analyzed with descriptive statistics of means, standard deviations, and range and compared with fitness norms. It was concluded that majority 111(74.0%) of the adolescents achieved the healthy fitness zone, 33(22.0%) were very lean, and 6(4.0%) needed improvement according to the normative standard of Body Mass Index test. For muscular strength, majority 78(52.0%) were weak, 66(44.0%) were normal, and 6(4.0%) were strong according to the normative standard of hand-grip strength test. For aerobic capacity fitness, majority 93(62.0%) needed improvement and were at health risk, 36(24.0%) achieved healthy fitness zone, and 21(14.0%) needed improvement according to the normative standard of PACER test. Majority 48(32.0%) of the participants had good hip flexibility, 38(25.3%) had fair status, 27(18.0%) needed improvement, 24(16.0%) had very good hip flexibility status, and 13(8.7%) of the participants had excellent status. Majority 61(40.7%) had average muscular endurance status, 30(20.0%) had poor status, 29(18.3%) had good status, 28(18.7%) had fair muscular endurance status, and 2(1.3%) of the participants had excellent status according to the normative standard of sit-up test. Majority 52(34.7%) had low jump ability fitness, 47(31.3%) had marginal fitness, 31(20.7%) had good fitness, and 20(13.3%) had high performance fitness according to the normative standard of standing long jump test. Based on the findings, it was concluded that majority of the adolescents had better Body Mass Index status, and performed well in both hip flexibility and muscular endurance tests. Whereas majority of the adolescents performed poorly in aerobic capacity test, muscular strength and jump ability test. It was recommended that to enhance wellness, adolescents should be involved in physical activities and recreation lasting 30 minutes three times a week. Schools should engage in fitness program for students on regular basis at both senior and junior classes so as to develop good cardio-respiratory, muscular fitness and improve overall health of the students.

Keywords : adolescents, health-related fitness, performance-related fitness, physical fitness

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