

Personal and Social Factors as Barriers to Leisure Walking in Residential Neighborhoods

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Abstract : Leisure walking is known as one of the most common types of physical activity that perform in purpose of recreation or health, which in turn may affect resident's health. In the recent years, promoting leisure walking activity in neighborhood areas become as one of the important issues regarding promoting mental and physical health, however; the level of physical inactivity is rising in many societies including Iran. As it was proven that the tendency to walk out of choice is not encouraging among Iranian people. Hence; understanding the main concern of residents regarding walking activity in their neighborhoods can help in increasing the tendency to do leisure activity among residents. Built environment, social and individual factors are known as the main factors that affect decision to walk, in this regard, the study aimed to investigate the influence of personal and social factors that prevent residents to walk for recreation or exercise in their neighborhoods. Hence the fear of crime and personal barriers were examined in the current research as social and personal factors respectively. To collect the required data, 500 questionnaires by using systematic sampling were distributed from March to May 2016 in four residential neighborhoods of Bandar Abbas in Iran out which 411 questionnaire turned out to be qualified to be used in the study. The Smart-PLS was used to analyze the data. The findings of the study revealed that personal and fear of crime both have significant influence on the level of recreation and exercise walking in the neighborhood areas. The study found that fear of crime has the higher influence on exercise and recreational walking behavior in comparison to individual factors. It was revealed that social factors such as fear of crime in the neighborhoods might be more important than the personal reason for walking optionally in the surrounding environment. The finding of this study can help urban and health researcher to know the significant influence of fear of crime and individual attitudes on the level of leisure walking activity, in addition, the findings of the study suggest that urban planners and designers, as well as public health promoters, need to highly consider the contribution of neighborhoods' social environment variables as well as individual variables to promote walking behavior changes among adult population.

Keywords : exercise walking, fear of crime, neighborhood, personal barriers, recreation walking

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