

**PERCEIVED HEALTH BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONGST ELDERLY PEOPLE IN  
VHEMBE DISTRICT, LIMPOPO PROVINCE  
SOUTH AFRICA**

**BY**

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## ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to describe the perception of the elderly people of Vhembe District concerning the health benefits of participating in physical activity. By identifying factors that these elderly people feel help or hinder their involvement in physical activity, measures can be taken to enable optimal participation.

**Methods:** This quantitative descriptive cross-sectional study involved a total population sample of 422 elderly persons registered to participate in eight sports and recreational hubs in Vhembe District, Limpopo province. A self-designed questionnaire was used for data collection. Data were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** Majority 187 (44.3%) of respondents showed negative perceptions regarding the physiological benefits associated with regular physical activity participation as compared to 87 (20.6%) were positive while 148 (35.1%) were neutral. Regarding physical benefits, the majority 254 (60.2%) respondents showed negative perceptions when compared to only 78(18.5%) who showed positive perceptions whereas 90 (21.3%) were neutral. Concerning psychological benefits, the majority 190 (45.1%) respondents also showed negative perceptions while 136 (32.2%) were positive.

**Conclusion & Recommendations:** Elderly people of Vhembe district have negative perceptions regarding the health benefits associated with regular physical activity participation, signifying that it has become a matter of increasing urgency to look for ways of eradicating these negative perceptions. Intervention strategies should be instituted to educate and inform elderly people about the health benefits of participating in physical activity.

**KEYWORDS:** Perception, health benefits, physical activity, elderly people, participation