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Review Paper

The Impact of Lifestyle on the Mental Health: A Review Paper

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ABSTRACT

Mental health is an important aspect of our overall wellbeing and have a significance effect on our daily life. While there are many factors that affects mental health Such as Biological aspect, Social setting, environment and much more, lifestyle choices can have a profound impact on mental health. This review paper critically analysis the existing literature to explore the complex relationship between lifestyle and mental health. It aims to delve deeper into daily lifestyle choices that people make, physiological aspect Such as physical health and activity, diet, Sleep, Work and the stress management and its impact on the mental health outcome. It also discusses the underlying causal factors that explains how life style can lead to mental health issues and highlighting the need for people, psychologist, healthcare professionals to also consider lifestyle factors and its modifications in order to promote mental health and enhance the psychological well-being. By thorough examination of available existing knowledge, this paper Contributes valuable insights to the field of psychology and mental health intervention. This review paper will provide a strong basis for the research scholars, psychologist and Practitioners to further explore and utilise this knowledge into the field of psychology.

Keywords: *Mental health, lifestyle, well-being, behaviour, quality of life*

Health is important for everyone to Perform well in all the aspects of their life. According to the World Health organisation (WHO), health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not just the absence of disease or infirmity. However, Health is of different types: mental, physical, spiritual, emotional and financial. All these collectively contribute to the overall health and well-being of an individual. By improving the physical and psychological well-being, decreasing the stress and leading to better coping mechanism (Felman, A. 2023).

Lifestyle of an individual refers to the living condition, lifestyle choices, decision, behaviour, habits, sleep, diet and physical activity (Collins English Dictionary, 2024). A good lifestyle is a basic requirement of all living beings it is how a person lives their life. There are various types of lifestyles a person lives: Active lifestyle, healthy lifestyle, solo life style, rural life style, urban life style, nomadic lifestyle, bohemian lifestyle, digital life style (Lifestyle Psychology- Unacademy, 2022). There are various approaches to the concept of lifestyle evolved from various fields, Out of which few are prominent ones. According to Max Weber, Lifestyle holds so much of significance that it also contributes to

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the social division. Lifestyle choices made by the individual living in a Society, serves to spot the limitations of that group by contributing to the honour system and deciding the status of the group (Weber, 1948, p. 187). Weber's own examples and those of "politics of lifestyle concern" school talks about lifestyle as religious practises, sexual behaviour, Alcoholic or non-alcoholic behaviour followed by moral values and fashion related choices (Veal, A. J. 1993). While talking about psychological approaches to lifestyle, Psychologist like Alfred Adler, Have emphasised on childhood experiences, which according to him influences the lifestyle of a person. As a person during his First five years of life develops their subjective view of the world they live in (Adler, A. 1929). Reynolds and Darden (1974) and Earl (1983) have correlated the concept of lifestyle to George Kelly's 'Personal Construct Theory', which Suggest that every individual have a system of "constructions" which provides a framework for the individual Development of a consistent and logical lifestyle.

It is important to focus on the lifestyle in order to bring stability and balance in life. To maintain the balance is not about working hard for days and months and earning extra money instead it is a life-long process, Which requires a person to focus on their every aspect of life, mainly including physiological, psychological, sociological and economical. A balance lifestyle come from a positive and healthy lifestyle choices that not only enhances the quality of life but also gives life satisfaction (Cam, 2012).

On the other hand, mental health has been defined by world Health Organisation (WHO, 2022) as a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the Stresses of life, realise their abilities, Learn well and work well, and contribute to their community. Mental health has been considered as an important component of health and well-being that helps the individual to make better lifestyle choices. Similar to the concept of "Health", Mental Health is more than just the absence of any mental disorder, Experience of which varies from one person to another depending upon different kinds of difficulty or distress, an individual faces in their everyday life. It is important to acknowledge the fact that a good mental health does not mean that person is not affected by any kind of event, experience or distress instead it means that a person is capable enough to cope and deal with the stresses in an efficient way.

Mental health is influenced by many factors such as environmental, social, structural, emotional and biological factors together combine to either protect or damage the mental health. Therefore, it is important to promote and prevent the mental health by identifying the various factors contributing to it and based on this making a more effective interventions to reduce the potential harm to the mental health well-being of people and building a supportive environment, increased resilience, self-esteem and self-efficacy etc. Mental health can be improved by doing different things such as staying positive and having a positive outlook towards life, Practicing gratitude as well Forgiveness, Making healthy lifestyle choices, Building a strong and healthy relationship with others, Developing good coping skills, Having a meaning and purpose in life, Practising yoga and meditation which will also help in self-exploration And at last some relaxation techniques for example guided imagery, Deep breathing exercises, Biofeedback (National Library of Medicine, n.d.)

Living a healthy lifestyle is important for an individual to achieve the maximum health status In all aspect including mental health. However, due to various reasons average number of people are living unhealthy lifestyle Which is Not only deteriorating their physical health but also leading to various Mental health issues such as depression and

common disorders like binge eating followed by alcohol abuse and insomnia Have become quite common nowadays. To avoid such issues and difficulties one can follow few things on a regular basis to maintain a healthy lifestyle and thereby preventing as well as promoting enhanced mental health and well-being (Ayres, N. 2024). These are as follows:

1. Eating healthy: It is important to eat a balanced diet which should include all the essential supplements for our body. Eating healthy food three times a day as well as hydrating your body with enough water helps in improving both physical and mental health leading to increased productivity.
2. Sleep: Quality outcome Comes from increased productivity along with concentration and for that one need to have proper sleep. Both medical as well psychological field have emphasised on following a proper bedtime routine.
3. Physical activity: Lack of physical activity can lead to serious physical and mental health issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, obesity and psychological distress, emotional imbalance. Lack of physical activity or more than enough physical activity, both can lead to various health issues.
4. Prioritising mental health: Mental health is a key component of Overall health of a person. To improve mental well-being one can practice mindfulness, meditation, journaling, gratitude, forgiveness etc. And seeking emotional and social support at times of difficulty.
5. Recognising the needs of your mind and body as well as Regular health checkups: Acknowledging the demand of body and mind Is essential and foremost step to a good health. On an yearly basis full body checkup is essential and also seeking the help of mental health professional if having any mental botheration or issue Instead of avoiding due to various health related stigma.

Practicing these few things on a regular basis can help a person to achieve a well-balanced life which is Crucial for Physical and mental health, with increased productivity in all the areas.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Investigating this complex relationship between the lifestyle and mental health is important to both a health care provider as well the professionals working in the field of psychology. This review paper critically analysis the existing available literature and evidences to discover the influence of lifestyle on the mental health. Mental health is not limited to a state of not having any mental disorder or illness, It is much more than that. Mental health is often associated with many stigmas in the society further leading to discrimination and stereotypes. People often avoid their mental health due to their lack of awareness or due to the fear of being discriminated by their social setting. Lifestyle on the other hand refers to a "way of living" (Niosi, 2021) Which Consists of various dimensions, Including habits, choices, quality of life, sleep, diet and physical activity etc. All of which affects the outcome of mental health.

Covid-19 has led to the increased awareness of importance of mental health (Upadhyay and Pal, 2024). According to WHO, lifestyle is now one of the important factor to consider when talking about health 60% of the health related factors and quality of life is now correlated to the lifestyle of an individual (Ziglio, Currie & Rasmussen, 2004). In a study conducted in 2020, studied the changes in the lifestyle of people during the first and second wave of COVID-19 pandemic. Findings of this study suggests a very small observable change however negative changes were more associated with the increased level of mental illnesses, pandemic also increased the health disparity and mental health challenges among people

(Blom et al., 2021). According to one of the study, lifestyle significantly impacted the physical and mental health of an individual (Farhud, D. D., 2015). Blood relation in some of the culture, nation or tradition is one of the leading lifestyle which results into genetic disorder, further this kind of unhealthy lifestyle acts as a preventive factor in decreasing genetic diseases (WHO,2001). Study conducted by Farhud, 2015 has talked about 9 key factors that can help an individual to achieve a healthy lifestyle and thereby enhancing their mental well-being which are Diet and Taking care of body mass index, Regular Exercise, Having enough sleep, sexual Relation Necessary to some extent, Avoiding substance abuse, Avoiding medication abuse, Use of modern technology In an effective way without misusing it, Spending leisure time, study Includes gaining the knowledge of new things such as trend. Illnesses, health related topics.

Lifestyle and mental health are strongly correlated yet professionals have placed less importance on life style factors Which can contribute to the treatment of various medical Condition while also promoting individual and social welfare and not only that it also helps in bringing efficiency in cognitive functioning (Walsh, R. 2011). In a longitudinal study conducted on college students before and during the COVID 19 pandemic, It was observed that there is a huge difference in the habit, Diet, sleep and in their overall mental health status, Highlighting the cause-and-effect relationship between the lifestyle behaviour and common mental health issues like depression. This study also suggested that Reduced or imbalanced physical activity schedule increases the risk of depression (Giuntella, et. al, 2021). In a survey study conducted on a community from Germany, aiming to Explore the connexion between various aspects of lifestyle and mental health found that, the healthy lifestyle choices result into less psychological distress with better life satisfaction while unhealthy behaviours and choices including alcohol abuse and smoking can lead to Mental health issues like depression, anxiety and stress (Velten et al., 2014). Similarly in another study conducted on college student to explore the variability between lifestyle factors and mental health factors Based on self-reported psychological distress, after a thorough analysis Significant difference was found in three mental health factor which were optimism, social support and self-esteem on the other hand in lifestyle variables Different groups reported different app style behaviour mainly screen time consumption of fruit and sugar-based beverages. Although This study did not specify the role of lifestyle variables in mental distress however result indicated that these mental health factors leads to reduced level of mental distress (Knowlden, Hackman, & Sharma, 2016). Not only on student but there are studies conducted In industrial field also One such study is conducted on factory workers in Japan where a general health questionnaire and health practises based questionnaire was administered to around 2,132 male and 668 females, Data analysis of this sample revealed a strong but negative correlation between unhealthy or imbalanced lifestyle practices with psychological distress and its components such as somatic symptoms, anxiety, insomnia and social dysfunction. On an overall level this study concluded that healthy practices Is associated with enhanced mental health status in those of factory workers which again adds on to the evidence that good lifestyle leads to better mental health (Ezoe and Morimoto, 1994).

In India life is perceived as a way of living, thinking and behaviour (Tiwari and Pandey, 2013). Concept of lifestyle in India is quite unique as it is based on the principles of Karma and Dharma (Bagwatgeeta S Shloka 13 – 20). In Indian context There are several stages (ashrams) of life which are Brahmacharya referring to student life, grihstha which is householder, vanprasth which is forest dweller and Lastly sanyas which is the stage of ascetic, All these stages are main in order to bring peace harmony and discipline in the life

of family as well as society. It emphasises that lifestyle including diet, habit, mental exercise, social network etc., plays a crucial role in either preventing or developing cognitive disorders among which Alzheimer's is one of the most common one often suffered by elderly leading to social isolation. The sacred books of India like Ramayana and Mahabharata talks about imbalanced mental state and how one can cope and balance them Through right knowledge and action. Indian healing practices strongly suggest to follow yoga, meditation and exercise to prevent mental health Which will also help in achieving greater health status And holistic wellbeing. To stay healthy and individual need to follow healthy ways of life which is strongly emphasised by Ayurveda it also About the fact that with growing age, a person's physical and mental health starts to decline but it could be slow down by following proper interventions and healthy lifestyle practices like Taking herbal diet, Consumption of whole grains, fruits, green vegetable, regular exercise, simple food and working on the 5 senses of body (ayurvedic approach) Which will also help in longevity and better mental health (Sodhi and Goldsmith, 2012).

In a study conducted on Canadian adolescence where Mental illnesses affects > 15 % of adolescents. Finding of this study Highly recommends to Adhere to Healthy lifestyle behaviours and self-care From childhood itself which will not only helpful in improving mental health but will also reduce the burden on use of primary care associated with mental illnesses (Loewen, et. Al. 2019). The environment where an individual lives is also a crucial factor comes under the Broad term lifestyle, there are evidences Suggesting that imbalance in the following six elements that is sleep, omega-3, exercise, rumination, sunlight and socialization of modern life could impair the mental health. Ilardi and His colleagues Criticised the modern lifestyle which no longer provides the sufficient amount of the above six factors (Ilardi et. al., 2007). Results from this study suggest that in order to reduce the psychological distress, interventions are needed so as to increase these important lifestyle elements good enough for an individual to lead a healthy life and Improved mental health (Heath and Berman, 2008). In a broad cross-sectional survey conducted nationwide to explore the relationship between lifestyle of adolescents and their mental health by utilising a sample of Japanese adolescent, This survey was Started from December 2004 till January 2005 based on random selection of participants And a self-administered questionnaire was used which addresses various factors such as lifestyle, sleep health, habits and mental health status of the participant. Interestingly it was found that females were more prone to poor mental health Due to their various unhealthy habits concluding that modification in the lifestyle and habits can be beneficial in preventing the high-risk population (Tanihata et. al, 2015). In a study examining the impact of health behaviour or lifestyle factors on the mental health and its effect on the ageing, It was a large-scale study which showed the positive connection of healthy lifestyle with both the biological as well as mental ageing and well-being (Hautekiet et. al., 2022). In a cross sectional study consisting of 3085 japanese adult participants aged 40-69 out of which 1527 were males and 1558 were females Utilised a Japanese version of general health questionnaire (GHQ-12) and questions based on socio economic and lifestyle factors To study household income employment status and lifestyle factors are related to various mental health conditions revealed that both male and females are prone to poor mental health due to lack in various factors highlighting the need for social security specifically for those coming from various socioeconomic backgrounds (Nagasu, kogi & yamamoto, 2019).

Nowadays, Few behaviour and lifestyle choices have become quite common for example late night parties, lack of sleep, Hearing too much music, less physical exercise and more screen time, extreme body shape concern, Consumption of irrelevant things and substance

abuse together have created a new way of living life inviting both physical and mental health issues. Once such a study was conducted to study relation between Lifestyle and general health of personal in Dastgheib Hospital, Shiraz Concluded that focusing on physical mental and spiritual health while spending more time with family, education, sport and socialising can effectively improve the psychological wellbeing of people (Hakiminya and Parnian, 2018). Depression nowadays is one of the most common mental health conditions, which has been repeatedly correlated with unhealthy behaviour more specifically smoking in adolescent. A longitudinal study was conducted in oslo, Norway to assess how smoking behaviour and mental health are affected by other unhealthy lifestyle factors Which revealed that smoking behaviours in young adolescents are linked to psychological distress in later years But this finding is associated with only girls not boys adding that there are other lifestyle factors that affect and lead to such outcome However this study do not completely prove the causal relationship between these factors (Lien et. al., 2009). Another study from belgium focusing on healthy lifestyle behaviours among adolescents coming from different family, further emphasising the role of family affluence Indicating towards a need of integrating lifestyle behaviours as an important factor while making interventions for mental health promotion in both the cases of low to medium and high family affluence (Maenhout et. al. 2020). A study conducted in 2018 highlighted the importance of making healthy lifestyle choices which could enhance and promote the mental well being of an individual therefore a longitudinal study was conducted to examine the importance of lifestyle choices for Promoting and preventing mental health In German and Chinese students Reveal that lifestyle have a significant effect on our mental health also taking some healthy choices like enough physical activity, non-alcoholic, non-smoking etc can improve the mental health within a period year (Velten et. al., 2018). A review Was done to study how lifestyle factors can impact the Physical health of people with any specific mental illness Which advocates for the greater attention to be placed on health assessment and monitoring of people with mental health issues in order to reduce the rate of morbidity and mortality especially for those of disadvantaged population (Stanley and Laugharne, 2014). Lastly Another study which aimed to analyse how lifestyle and demographic factors can lead to poor mental health in adolescent population Concluded that it is important to identify and address these two important factors which are contributing to poorer mental health will help in better understanding of how mental health problems can be addressed more effectively (Robinson et. al., 2011).

The review of literature presented in this paper reveals the importance to understand this complex interplay between how lifestyle factors can impact mental health. It is important to focus on a holistic state of wellbeing which are often hindered by stigmas and discrimination deeply rooted in various culture and society. This review paper covers both national and international studies which is strengthening the importance of healthy lifestyle in order to promote, prevent and enhance mental well-being across diverse population, Particularly to those of disadvantaged population (Stanley and Laugharne, 2014). In conclusion this review paper provides evidence-based insight into the relationship of lifestyle with mental health however research is needed to figure out the gaps so that a more effective intervention could be planned While also Providing crucial information to healthcare providers, policy makers, and other professionals.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion this review paper offers Valuable insight on the multifaceted Relationship of lifestyle and mental health based on wide range of existing literature from different country, culture, demographic and Geographical context. This paper reveals the significant impact of

lifestyle factors such as diet, sleep, exercise etc. on the mental health and well-being. In spite of Growing awareness of healthy lifestyle there are still gaps Indicating towards the need to conduct more empirical research and longitudinal studies With respect to cultural differences And Integrated approach where lifestyle interventions merged into the health care practices providing a more holistic approach. This review paper also highlights the importance to address the lifestyle factors and it's crucial in the field of mental health. Furthermore, There is a need of more g searches and interdisciplinary collaborations To increase the awareness among population and address the complex issue related to the lifestyle and mental health issues.

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Conflict of Interest

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