

# Improving Physical Fitness Through Methods Of Mass Communication

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## Abstract

Numerous media formats, including documentaries, reality shows, newscasts, and public service announcements, promote the importance of physical exercise in improving health. Understanding the importance and impact of this message may be gained via research on audience exposure, beliefs, and reactions to media portrayals of physical exercise. In-depth interviews with 46 Australian individuals in New South Wales were used for an audience reception research. The population was divided into groups based on age, gender, zip code, and BMI. Even when reminded, most respondents could not remember any media mention of physical exercise. Reality television was by far the most common form of exposure, followed by news and sports broadcasts on television. Health hazards associated with inactivity, particularly obesity, and the need of regular physical exercise were the most easily remembered themes.

Getting moving was seen as a question of free will, or in the case of kids, parental duty. Respondents felt the media paid insufficient attention to physical exercise, overemphasised hazards, and failed to offer helpful guidance. Using the media to raise awareness about the socioecological factors that contribute to inactivity is crucial in Australia given the pervasive influence of reality television on public perceptions of fitness and health. Positive and actionable messages should be communicated in physical activity marketing.

**Keywords:** the Mass Media; Sports Fitness; the Concept of Sports

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## Introduction

Strategies to deal with the public health concern of physical inactivity have placed a high value on the mass media due to its widespread audience and influential nature. Awareness and understanding have increased thanks to several physical activity programmes employing conventional media including television, radio, and billboard advertising [1, 2], although evidence of their influence on behaviours is equivocal. There

has been more consistent reporting of the success of community-wide physical activity programmes that use mass media tactics with community mobilisation, settings-based education, and environmental improvements [3, 4]. Online technologies, such as social media and interactive websites, are increasingly gaining attention for their potential as conduits for physically active treatments with broad public reach [5, 6].

It is widely acknowledged that the media is an important forum for advocating for policy change including public investments in infrastructure that promote active living, even if changing people's behaviours has been the primary goal of using the media in physical activity programmes. The media, especially news and current affairs programmes, play an important role in advocacy due to their ability to set the agenda [7] and shape public perceptions of the root causes of health issues, potential solutions, and those responsible for enacting change [8, 9]. A growing corpus of study is exploring the breadth and depth of media coverage on the issue of physical activity with the goal of monitoring and guiding media advocacy for physical exercise. According to research conducted in a number of different nations, physical exercise does not seem to be a major news priority, with less coverage and much fewer news items provided than obesity, diet, or smoking [10, 12]. Fewer studies have looked at how the media portrays physical activity; what little there is shows that the problem is represented as the responsibility of people and that environmental and policy determinants of inactivity are mostly ignored [13].

The media has permeated every facet of life and established itself as the primary source of social information. Beginning with the connection between sports and media, this piece examines the role of the mass media in raising people's fitness awareness, bolstering sports' social ties, and modernising the mass fitness concept; it then delves into the topic of how the media can be made more effective in advancing the sport industry, making suggestions like "paying more attention to mass media reports," "expanding coverage range and channels," "increasing format and content," and so on.

Constant reflection on the sort of research that will make this feasible is essential for making the most strategic and effective use of the mass media to encourage physical exercise. The quality of data given by evaluations of physical activity programmes has been improved according to the recommendations of many systematic studies [2, 3, 14]. Others have called for a critical evaluation of the underlying assumptions in marketing and advocacy research pertaining to physical exercise, as well as for an evaluation of the media technique that more accurately reflects the intricate procedures inherent in media communication [15]. Producers in the media generate and encode messages, which are

subsequently consumed, negotiated, and decoded by viewers. This branch of research, known as social constructionism [16], examines how different audiences receive, interpret, and react to a wide range of messages, as well as the factors that influence these processes.

The 2008 Beijing Olympic Games or the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games significantly contributed to the development of sports in China by testing the reporting levels and response capabilities of the country's mass media. The Olympic Games and the Asian Games offer a good platform for showcasing the international nature of sports and interpreting the spirit of sport at the highest level of competition for each nation, but without the dissemination of mass media in this platform, further attempts will fail to achieve the desired results.

### **The Concept and Social Functions of Mass Media**

**The Concept of the Mass Media :** Since the advent of newspapers, periodicals, television, radio, and the Internet in the 20th century, the media landscape has expanded exponentially. As science and technology continue to advance, so too do the various forms of mass communication. The word "spread," which comes from the English word "communication," has a wide range of connotations, most of which refer to interactions between people, the dissemination of information and the sharing of emotions.

According to scholars in the field of communication, "mass communication" refers to a specific social group that use sophisticated communication technology and methods to generate and disseminate information and knowledge. knowledge and information creation infrastructure that serves the vast majority of people in a society. Mass media, also known as the medium of mass communication, are the primary means of disseminating information to the general public in the contemporary era. These include print publications like newspapers and magazines as well as electronic media like television and radio.

**Social Functions of Mass Media:** The most fundamental roles of the mass media are information gathering and dissemination. The media has taken on the responsibility of spreading information about politics, economics, culture, and social issues, as well as preserving and celebrating our rich social and cultural histories. The mass media also drive forward social change and development by monitoring the social environment and under the watchful eye of public opinion. The mass media also serve as a source of spiritual nourishment by providing the public with opportunities for recreation and enjoyment.

Communication through radio, television, print media, and the internet has become an integral aspect of people's everyday lives, rivalling even the activities themselves as a source of amusement.

### **The Relationship between Sports and Mass Media**

**Sports the pull of the Media :** Since sports are a metaphor for advancing social progress and the human race, the extent to which they have developed is indicative of a the nation's overall strength and degree of social civilization. To further the material while spiritual civilization and the harmonious growth of society, as well as to improve the level of sports and fitness of individuals, the "Sports Law of the Communist Party of China" was officially passed at the 15th satisfying of the Permanent Commission of the Eighth National People's Congress.

Fast-paced coverage in a variety of outlets has brought sports law into the mainstream. The huge territory of China has spawned a national fitness boom, while the evolution of sports and the expanding wealth of sporting events have come to the fore. Athletes' never-say-die attitudes; bringing formerly inaccessible games like snooker, curling, and tennis to the attention of the general public through television, the internet, and other media.

**Media Attraction to Sports:** The widespread interest in and support for many sporting events and initiatives also contributed significantly to the growth of the sporting industry. Live or broadcast coverage of the 2008 Beijing Olympics was provided by a variety of Chinese media outlets, including the central set, two sets, five sets, seven sets, five in high-resolution cable channels, golf tennis and football circumstance two pay-per-view channels, and so on. In recent years, the number of individuals who engage in physical activity and who watch sporting events has doubled, thanks in large part to the proliferation of mass media and the growth of sports media reporters, the sports media, and broadcast time.

**Enhancing Public Health Awareness and Participation in Physical Fitness Awareness through the Mass Media :** Widespread exposure in the media has helped raise public consciousness about the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle, cultivate a love of physical activity, and encourage people to get moving by broadcasting a wide range of exciting sporting events, sports coverage, news, and comments from fans. The most crucial factor in the widespread popularity of sports like snooker, curling, and tennis among the general public is their exposure in the media. Not only do events like the FIFA

World Cup, NBA basketball playoffs, table tennis tournaments, and volleyball competitions provide a variety of stages for the growth of sport, but they also help spread awareness of and familiarity with the rules governing these sports. Many young people are attracted to the sports sector because of its allure and they spend a lot of time watching sporting events on television and participating in related fitness activities.

**Sports Expectations of Public thought Mass Media :** From the 2008 Beijing Olympics through the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games, the media sent massive amounts of material and live broadcast signals to every home, all over the globe. Media attention has helped the general public catch up on Olympic sports news and appreciate its philosophical underpinnings. The Olympic spirit promotes active involvement, a focus on "faster, higher, stronger," and the development of a physically active leisure culture. Spreading and making these concepts more well-known helps advance a fresh perspective on sports. There was a sports exhibition at Tian-an-men Square for 11 days straight during the 29th Olympic Games in Beijing. The primary display of physical activity is broken down into 14 big pieces and 122 lesser ones. Activities including aerobics dancing, televised gymnastics, fancy football, child care group callisthenics, shuttlecock, soccer and more were performed by over 20,000 individuals during the sports exhibition.

U.S. television news programmes devoted 15 minutes to covering the demonstration of Beijing Health Qigong practitioners in uniform at Tian'anmen Square [2]. To actively build a highly traditional characteristics of mass sports activities brand and to promote a healthy and harmonious sun-based lifestyle, the 2010 Asian Games were held in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province. Activities for "National Fitness Day" were first held in Guangzhou, Guangdong Province, in 2009. Since then, the city has continued to host events for "National Fitness Month," "National Fitness Day," "Health Walking on New Year," "Flower of Get Sports," "Dragon and Lion Jumping Lantern Festival," "Across the Pearl River" in the summer, "National Fitness Month," "The Health Walking of Thousands," "Million Climbing" in the fall, "Students Sunshine Athletics Activities," "M As a result, the country's fitness idea, which aims to improve people's health via exercise, will be spread far and wide over Asia, the last stronghold of global fitness [3].

**Impact of Mass Media on Improvement of Sports Coverage :** While the media industry has made strides, much more has to be done to increase the public's awareness of sports. China has established a "competitive power, sports weak" nation phenomena due to the fact that the country's sports establishment prioritises competitive sports above other

goals. The media was also negatively affected by this crazy trend, as they stopped paying attention to what makes sports really great.

The entertainment value of sports coverage is high, but the news outlets' primary interest is still in competitive sports; they do this by focusing on the personal lives and scandals of prominent athletes, while the credit really belongs to their support staff. The media should make the necessary changes and shift its coverage to include more coverage of mass sports so as to increase the general public's familiarity with these events and foster their growth. As a civilization has progressed, so has the number of people interested in watching sports broadcasts.

In order to promote the reestablishment of sport's social purpose, the media should increase the breadth of its coverage and enhance the quality of its reporting to meet the demands of a dynamic economic and social environment. On the one hand, there has to be more of an emphasis on developing sports literacy among the general youth population via the substance of sports information transmission. However, what advocates in Beijing call the People's Olympics argue is that the media should utilise sport as a communication tool in order to find sports and events that represent the spiritual level content and demonstrate the social aspects of sport.

**Promotion of Physical Activity through Mass Media:** The strategic usefulness of mass media communication in promoting physical activity lies in its ability to influence attitudes, societal norms, and individual behaviours, as well as to lobby for legislative change that would foster more conducive settings for physical exercise. Reach and effect size, as assessed by a standard battery of psychosocial and behavioural variables, have so far been the primary yardsticks by which these initiatives have been evaluated. Listening to audiences, using qualitative techniques that can record the range and complexity of message exposure as well as the meaning being derived from this, is recommended by a media analysis perspective for gaining a more nuanced understanding of the results of mass communication efforts [15, 23]. This is the first investigation of how people take in, process, and assess news reports on exercise in the media. The results provide insights into the direction of future communication efforts and contradict preconceptions policymakers and advocates for physical activity may have about the relevance and effectiveness of health authorities' communication endeavours.

Exposure and comprehension among audiences is a primary issue for those expressing public health messages in today's noisy, information-rich media environment [24]. The participants in this research reported having difficulty remembering information related

to physical exercise. Most of the material they could recollect seeing on TV came from a wide variety of shows. The low rate of spontaneous recall of government-initiated media campaigns promoting physical activity suggests that these cheaply financed programmes are unlikely to have much of an influence beyond the limited time periods within which they are assessed [3]. People most often cited popular reality shows like "The Biggest Loser" as a resource for fitness advice. Not only does this show attract a large audience, but some of its comedic elements have been shown to pique viewers' interest and even change their perspectives on health-related topics.

While news and current events shows also tend to draw sizable crowds, they aren't nearly as prominent a source of material about exercise as reality TV. That's in line with the results of other news analysis studies [10, 11, 13] that showed physical exercise to get far less attention than obesity. The coverage of sports and sporting news was given the same priority as that of other news and current events. The prevalence of commercial advertising of sporting goods as a reference for knowledge about physical activity was a surprising conclusion. This highlights the massive size of the exercise goods and services business, the influence of which on people's understanding of the benefits of physical activity and their motivation to engage in it has been largely overlooked by researchers, policymakers, and practitioners until now. Commercial messages may have an outsized impact on how media consumers frame this issue due to the greater regularity with which exercise-related items are advertised, as contrasted to those inside public service programmes advocating physical activity.

The health consequences of inactivity and the epidemic of screen time among kids were the most often remembered messages regarding physical exercise and inactivity. Overweight is the health outcome most significantly connected with inactivity, which is consistent with the findings that 'The Biggest Loser' was a popular source of information and with past studies demonstrating that obesity has had extensive news attention in Australia in the past few years [30, 31]. Some individuals still think they need to join a gym or employ a fitness instructor in order to be in shape, despite the fact that they have heard and recalled key health tips promoting physical exercise, such as the importance of walking and short periods of activity. This exemplifies how different and sometimes contradictory messages on the importance of physical exercise are impacting popular perceptions.

**Societal Perception on Mass Media Role:** A majority of respondents felt that media depictions of physical activity didn't do much beyond educate them of the dangers of

being sedentary and inspire them to go out and move more. Although modest, this effect was consistent with the most important claims they could recall. Several participants noted that they were less likely to engage in sedentary behaviours after watching "The Biggest Loser," demonstrating the potential impact of modelling in entertainment programming on health beliefs and actions [19]. One possible drawback of this kind of private role modelling is a resulting lack of understanding of social and environmental variables that influence public health problems.

Because of the consequences for public backing of governmental action to address this problem, the way in which an audience frames physical activity is a major concern for physical activity advocates. No one factor was identified as the primary cause of inactivity based on the comments made by respondents. Reasons given ranged from the predominance of sedentary employment to the prevalence of personal laziness. Exposure to short, episodic information in the media, it has been suggested, might cause viewers to develop disjointed views about an issue, predisposing them to take the default viewpoint that people are responsible for their own issues. When asked who they thought was ultimately responsible for doing something about the epidemic of sedentary lifestyles, the vast majority of adults and children alike pointed the finger at themselves. Because of this, advocates need to have more fruitful conversations with the news and entertainment media on environmental and policy solutions to important drivers of physical activity, such as transportation planning, workplace features, and urban design. Initiating a public discussion regarding the too individualistic tone of shows like "The Biggest Loser" might help bring attention to the many social and environmental issues that contribute to the nation's inactivity rate.

Respondents felt underserved by media coverage of physical activity and felt that more attention should be paid to this topic, with less emphasis on negative health effects and more on clear, practical suggestions to encourage regular participation. This lends credence to the findings of a review of the effects of various approaches to the design of messages encouraging physical activity, which found that 'gain-framed' messages emphasising the benefits of activity rather than the harms of inactivity were more effective at inspiring action. This demonstrates how viewers think of health issues as experiential and how they anticipate 'news you can use' to be included in coverage. Achievable physical activity suggestions with clear instructions tend to be more helpful in raising self-efficacy, as was shown in the aforementioned assessment of methods for crafting messages.



## Conclusion

This study's findings suggest a renewed and concerted effort is required to engage the Australian media in order to disseminate information about the benefits of physical activity to public health and the risks associated with inactivity. We need alternative frames that underline the necessity of exercise regardless of weight as a reaction to the media and real entertainment's portrayal of exercise as necessary because of obesity. The news media play a vital role in this discussion by providing a platform for knowledge regarding the broader causes of inactivity and the required individual, organisational, belonging, and policy solutions due to their enormous audience reach and comprehensive coverage of obesity along with other health concerns. When communicating with the media, researchers or advocates for physical exercise should keep in mind the audience's strong desire for presentation of feasible options [36] and the media's inclination for novelty, human tales, and visual attraction. There needs to be more study [37] of how social media may be used by health agencies to encourage people to be more physically active via direct communication with individuals. Traditional public health campaigns are only going to make up a tiny fraction of media coverage on physical activity, thus in order to maximise audience engagement, they need to focus on encouraging and practical advice for being more active.

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