ELDERLY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES IN SEARCH FOR LIFE QUALITY

IDOSOS E ATIVIDADE FÍSICA: BENEFÍCIOS E DESAFIOS EM BUSCA DA QUALIDADE DE VIDA

RESUMO

Objetivo: investigar a percepção dos idosos em relação à prática de atividade física. Método: pesquisa-ação com abordagem qualitativa, realizada na Unidade Básica de Saúde da Família Bonald Filho, localizada no bairro do Monte Santo de Campina Grande/PB, Brasil, com 12 idosas. Os dados foram coletados em domicílio; em seguida transcritos, extraídas as ideias centrais e as expressões-chaves e analisados seguindo a Técnica de Análise do Discurso do Sujeto Coletivo. O projeto de pesquisa foi aprovado pelo Comitê de Ética em Pesquisa da Universidade Federal de Campina Grande, processo 20112911-066. Resultados: a faixa etária das idosas variou entre 60 e 76 anos com predominância entre 68 e 70 anos (50%), seguido pela faixa etária de 71 a 76 anos (33,4%) e de 60 a 63 anos (16,6%). Conclusão: os idosos possuem concepções semelhantes e positivas acerca do exercício físico e qualidade de vida, tendo consciência de que esta prática regular contribui na melhoria de sua saúde.

Descritores: Idosos; Atividade Física; Qualidade de Vida.

RESUMEN

Objetivo: investigar la percepción de las personas mayores en relación con la actividad física. Método: investigación-acción con enfoque cualitativo, realizado en la Básica de Salud Son Familia Bonald Filho, que se encuentra en el barrio de Monte Santo, en la ciudad de Campina Grande/PB/Brasil, con 12 ancianos. Los datos se recogieron en casa, luego transcritas en su totalidad, extraíendo las ideas principales y las expresiones clave y analizados por el análisis técnico del Discurso del Sujeto Colectivo. El proyecto de investigación fue aprobado por el Comité de Ética de la Universidad Federal de Campina Grande con la referencia 20112911-066. Resultados: la edad de las mujeres osciló entre 60 y 76 años, en su mayoría entre 68 y 70 años (50%), seguido por el grupo de edad de 71-76 años (33,4%) y 60-63 años (16,6%). Conclusión: las personas mayores tienen concepciones similares y positivas acerca del ejercicio físico y calidad de vida, sabiendo de que una práctica regular ayuda a mejorar su salud.

Descritores: Idosos; Actividad Física; Calidad de Vida.
Elderly and physical activity: benefits and challenges...

Family Health Bonald Son and consequently, a large number of sedentary elderly, generating increased functional disability, prevalence and lack of control of noncommunicable diseases and their complications.

From this premise is that we became interested in developing this research aimed to answer the following questions: Why only a small proportion of the elderly in assisted-UBF Bonald Son seeks physical activity? As seniors understand the physical exercise? What kind of actions would contribute to greater adherence to this practice of the elderly?

This study is justified by the contributions that will bring in terms of the extension, the elderly and the health service. Regarding the extension, the survey data will subsidize the planning of public health in accordance with the reality of this population, and the elderly, will provide greater satisfaction in physical exercise, reduction of functional disability and control of diseases prevalent in this age age.

**OBJECTIVES**

- Develop physical activities according to the reality experienced by the elderly in an assisted Family Health Unit in the city of Campina Grande.
- Investigate the benefits of physical activity for seniors.
- Identify the reasons why the elderly to practice physical exercises.
- Raise the factors that hinder and facilitate this practice in the unit.
- Plan and implement physical activities for seniors in the unit.

**METHOD**

For purposes of this research we chose an action research approach with quantitative and qualitative.

"Action research is designed and carried out in close association with an action or the resolution of a collective problem and in which researchers and participants representative of the situation or problem are involved in a cooperative and participatory".

The population of the research was all seniors enrolled in UBSF Bonald Son, located in the neighborhood of Monte Santo in the city of Campina Grande / PB / Brazil. How sample was used only seniors enrolled in UBSF, totaling 12 and older who are entered into the group of regular physical activity unit.

Data were collected after reading and signing the consent form. To be able to actually meet the objectives of the work was accomplished application form, previously

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**INTRODUCTION**

Aging is considered a stage of individual development that begins at birth, ie, this process as asked by humans is a natural transformation phase of its development as the other phases experienced throughout life, which may be influenced by biological, genetic, environmental, psychological and sociocultural factors, and this process occur involutions of organic character, physical, mental and even social.

It is permeated by physical changes, social and psychological, that affect individuals in a unique way, and that often results in weakening of the elderly, making it prone to loss of autonomy, quality of life and decrease their health condition.

It can be understood as a consequence of the passage of time and it brings a series of effects on different body systems that somehow diminish fitness and physical performance. However, many of these deleterious effects are secondary to the lack of physical activity. For this reason, the practice of regular exercise becomes crucial at this time of life.

The capabilities that most affect the quality of life are reduced when: strength and flexibility, these same capabilities and get better fast when started a practice of physical activity. This practice promotes an overall improvement in the body of the elderly, including cardiorespiratory benefits, decreased risk of chronic degenerative diseases, decrease body fat, increase bone mineral density and muscle volume, avoiding trivial and serious fractures. The drugs can be reduced or even suspended, due to the improvement of the body compared to programs involving physical activity, as in the case of diabetes, arthritis, problems with high cholesterol and hypertension.

A very important factor triggered by the practice of physical activity is to reduce the number of falls by providing gain muscle strength and improvements in gait, balance, reflexes and speed while walking.

Importantly, although the practice of physical activity since conducted properly, is always associated with a positive change in the lives of the elderly, it happens differently in each individual, according to their individuality.

We know that physical activity has many benefits for the elderly population, however, was observed during the activities of the Labor Education Program - PET that there is little demand for elderly by exercise in Unity...
structured, containing questions related to the subjective perception of the elderly against the physical activity.

This unit was chosen because of the partnership with the Education Program at Work for Health - PET Aging Health.

After application of the research instrument, data originating from were analyzed following the technique of Analysis of Collective Subject Discourse (CSD) which is an explicit proposal for reconstitution of a being or entity empirical collective opinante as a subject of speech delivered in the first person singular.

Data were tabulated following four steps which are operational are:
1. Selection of key expressions of each speech may be continuous or discontinuous.
2. Identifying the main idea of each of these key phrases.
3. Identification of the central ideas similar or complementary.
4. Junction of key expressions concerning central ideas, forming a synthesis of the speech, which is the collective subject discourse.

After construction of the speeches, the speeches were discussed from the benchmark proposed in this research.

The research design of this study was submitted to the Ethics Committee and the

Federal University of Campina Grande, in accordance with Resolution N°. 196/96 of the National Health Council which regulates the conduct of research with human subjects and was approved on January 26\textsuperscript{th} of 2012, under file number 20112911-066, to prepare the final report.

RESULTS

Given the importance of the study, we sought to initially present the profile of the population. The research was conducted with elderly members of the group of regular physical activity, developed by PET - Elderly Health subgroup of physical activity, being 100% by women, totaling 12 elderly, aged between 60 and 76 years old. Where is predominantly between 68 and 70 years old (50%), followed by age group 71-76 years old (33.4%) and after 60 to 63 years old (16.6%).

Data collection was performed at home, being hit from the visit for each individual participant, where questionnaires were applied; it is possible to describe the central ideas of each collective subject discourse for each question in this instrument.

Each issue of the instrument resulted in a table, containing the central idea identified with their respective CSDs. In Figure 1 we observed that the elderly do not have proper understanding of what really is regular physical activity.

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)

In Figure 2 we obtained as a result no doubt that regular physical activity performed during the study period brought many benefits to the participant population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 1</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular physical activity: walking and exercises.</td>
<td>Is walking, exercise half an hour. (E2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Are exercises and walking. (E3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A walk, stretching do good for the body. (E8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity is to move yourself, go walking and aerobics. (E9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 2</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Superficial comprehension.</td>
<td>It’s a welfare, I got more energy. (E1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity. (E4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s an improvement in all ways for the older people. (E5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It’s a movement. (E6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ideal for health and important for the spine. (E7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 3</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Comprehends how to have good health.</td>
<td>Physical activity and health. (E11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physical activity is the improvement of health, avoids health problem. (E10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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In English/Portuguese

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2763
In Figure 3 we saw that besides the physical benefits of exercise group brought significant improvement in the level of the relationship participants, allowing bonds of friendship, the approach and exchange of experience of the everyday.

In Figure 4 we observed the changes in the lives of the elderly, which involves changes in health, encompassing mobility, safety and comfort in daily activities experienced by the elderly.

In Figure 5 showed up the benefits from the participation of the group of regular physical activity group?

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**Table 1:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 1</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pain relief.</td>
<td>I broke free of pain. (E1) Decreases the pain of the spine. (E7) Improves body aches more and is more active. (E11) It brings relief from pain momentarily, because it hurts when I stop again. (E12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 2:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 2</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relief of tiredness.</td>
<td>Freed me from weariness. (E1) [...] The walk helped me not get more tired. (E5) The improvement is because we do not feel more relieved and more fatigued. (E10)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 3:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Central Idea 3</th>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relief of body movements and of the joints.</td>
<td>It is good. Improved my bones, my joints, my movements. (E2) Improves on my floor, I got better was crippled walk firmer. (E3) [...] Improved handling of my body. (E5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Figure 2.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: Regular physical activity has brought some benefit specific to you?

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**Figure 3.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: you believe that participating in a group physical activity improves the relationship between the participants? Why?

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**Figure 4.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: What changed in your life with participation in regular physical activity group?

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**Figure 5.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: What changed in your life with participation in regular physical activity group?
Central Idea 1  
**Confirmation of the many benefits of physical activity.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing exercises improves many things [...] and we develop more. (E1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because improved my health in general. (E2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improves the body, we feel better. (E4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why had improvements in my body. (E5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes us home is good It is very good. (E6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped develop better everyday activities. (E7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's good 'pros' nerves, right up to the blood. (E8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreases the pains of rheumatism and improves my circulation. (E9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical activity is helping me in my tendons injection. (E10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eased tiredness in the legs. (E12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: Join the group provided him with improvements in quality of life?

In Figure 6 the difficulties were expressed that the elderly face in performing physical activities developed in the group.

Central Idea 1  
**Physical limitations of age.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I feel pains in shoulders feel pains in my legs because of varicose veins (feel tired). (E2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to leg pain. (E11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes we think will do and can not, feel pain, and can do more tries. (E8)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Idea 2  
**Diseases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I'm bad health, sight and can not do, I do not know. (E3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have not because all I can do because I have herniated disc and bursitis in the arm. (E4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due to problems in vision (partial loss). (E10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The drugs hinder the exercises, I feel dizzy. (E12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 6.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: Are there any difficulty (s) that prevents Mr (Mrs) perform all activities?

In Figure 7 the elderly voiced their opinions about what could be done to obtain the exercise group improved in their applicability.

Central Idea 1  
**Larger number of participants.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More people participating in the group, because few people discourage group. (E1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite people to join [...]. (E4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was that people were more willing to join the group. (E7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gather a group [...]. (E9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite more people to join. (E11)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Idea 2  
**Lectures and group dynamics.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>[...] Do not always have the missing group to encourage everyone to participate. (E4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...] To talk and chat with everyone. (E8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[...] Make a reception, create a song of welcome, warn those who arrive late and explain what is to strengthen the group. (E9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Should have more talks to take our doubts and terms for more information. (E10)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remedy associated with the activity. (E12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Idea 3  
**Physiotherapist monitoring**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discourse of the collective elder</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Doing more exercise and physical therapy monitoring. (E2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.** Central idea and collective subject discourse concerning the following question: In your opinion, what can be done to improve activities of this group?

**DISCUSSION**

With respect to Figure 1 on one central idea, the collective subject discourse of users UBSF group participants develop regular physical activity practice walks, stretching exercises and aerobics as regular physical activity. These activities are undertaken in a constant and considered continuous physical activity. Importantly, the development of physical activities should be continuous so that they can provide benefits.

The walk has the great advantage can be practiced by anyone, regardless of age or sex, and, being a natural and healthy way to exercise at low intensity and impact, represents an activity provides both improved physical conditioning as the body composition,
and is therefore recommended for the elderly, individuals with a body weight above the average, patients with osteoporosis or osteoarthritis, those with heart disease, angioptas, diabetics and for people who fall as having risk for circulatory diseases (smoking, hypertension sedentary, stressed, etc.).

In central idea 2, reveals that users have a superficial understanding and does not have enough information on the subject.

The practice of regular physical activity reduces the risk of premature death, heart disease, stroke, breast and colon cancer and type II diabetes. Acts to prevent or reduce high blood pressure, prevents weight gain (reducing the risk of obesity), assists in the prevention or reduction of osteoporosis, promotes well-being, and reduces stress, anxiety and depression.

Regarding the central idea 03, shows that regular physical activity is directly related to having health, since its practice brings numerous benefits to its practitioners mostly the elderly, the more active a person is, the less physical limitations she will.

Besides benefiting functional capacity, exercise promotes improvements in physical fitness. In the elderly the components of physical fitness suffer a decline that can compromise your health. The health-related physical fitness can be defined as the ability to perform daily activities with vigor and energy and show lower risk of developing chronic degenerative diseases or conditions associated with low levels of physical activity. The components of physical fitness related to health and may be more influenced by habitual physical activities are cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular strength and endurance and flexibility, so are most valued, and predictors of health status.

Thus it is apparent that the ideas referred to conform to what the literature says.

Figure 2 with the central idea of the speech 01, makes it clear that among the many benefits derived from physical activity as quoted by them is the pain relief, which enables them to perform their activities of daily living with a comfort and an improvement in their quality of life.

The physical activity also promotes better body composition, decreased joint pain, increased bone mineral density, improved glucose utilization, improved lipid profile, increased aerobic capacity, improved strength and flexibility, decreased vascular resistance. And as psychosocial benefits are the relief of depression, increased confidence, improved self-estimate.

In central idea 02, it is observed that the fact of physical activity continuously delivers more force to the respiratory system greatly improving its functionality in effect your breathing lung in general.

The more active the person is more cardiorespiratory capacity it will, but only if it has a physical effect if interim domestic chores with physical activity. Sedentary people can also start your physical activity, since it is gradual and appropriate. The exercises provide health benefits while practicing, is not cumulative and must be rather solid. Do deep breathing exercises strengthens the lungs and breathing oxygenates the blood.

In 03 central idea is expressed that provide physical activities for the elderly practitioners of group activities in an improvement in the elasticity of your muscles and less stiffness perfecting the movement of joints.

Changes in locomotor occurred as a result of aging that cause loss in balance, bone weakness, joint pain and decreased function may have its effect minimized by practicing regular physical exercise.

With reference to Figure 3, the central idea of 01, it is stated that participate in a physical activity group provides the increased level of relationship between group members, promoting a thaw between them.

From the standpoint of mental, physical activity, especially when practiced in a group raises the self-esteem of the elderly, contributes to the implementation of psychosocial relationships and the emotional equilibrium.

In the second central idea is emphasized that physical activity groups provides building new friendships and increased communication.

The feeling of loneliness, worthlessness, hopelessness and inability permeate the lives of the elderly. Seeking to assuage these feelings, seniors are encouraged to attend elderly groups because they offer space to share their experiences. Studies “show that the elderly need to participate in leisure activities for not feeling alone.”

In central idea 03, which is considered part of a group of physical activity in the 3rd age is exciting to share ideas and exchange experiences affairs of their interests.

In similar studies, argue that the participation of older people living in groups, leads to learning, since they share ideas,
Elderly and physical activity: benefits and challenges...

Referring to Figure 4, from the central idea of 01, it is remarkable that participate in a group physical activity improves health of the elderly. Regular physical activity has contributed significantly to the elderly who modify their behavior and provide transformations biological, psychological and social. Studies claim that health is to leave home, talk, walk, do not have conflicts and have good housing conditions.

In central idea 02, it should be noted that the evidence showed the beneficial effect of an active lifestyle, maintaining functional capacity and physical autonomy during the aging process, minimizing the degeneration caused by aging and thus provide a general improvement in health and quality of life. Therefore, they are so pervasive concepts of improved quality of life and well-being, in which physical exercise is effective.

In central idea 3, is attributed to the importance of physical activity in older adults to maintain good bone structure. Although factors such as genetics, hormonal homeostasis and food may be determinant in BMD (bone mineral density), the level of physical activity appears to have important influence on this variable.

In central idea 04, physical activity is identified as motivation to perform activities of daily living. The motivation for the implementation of regular physical activity, according to Nahas, is the result of complex interaction of psychological variables, social, environmental and genetic.

Hence, you can see that the exercise program for seniors should provide benefits in relation to motor skills that support the performance of activities of daily living, improving the ability to work and leisure and changing the rate of decline in functional status, health conditions favoring. A quiet old age is the sum of everything that benefits the body, such as exercise, healthy eating, space for leisure, good family relationships, finally, we need to invest in a better quality of life. Therefore, physical activity becomes indispensable to this sum.

In the study, it was observed that "to obtain this quality of life is necessary to strike a balance and well-being of man as a human being, the society in which he lives and cultures exist."

Referring to Figure 6 speeches central idea presented in 01, you can see that the difficulties that accompany the aging process can affect performance of activities, with the limitations caused by age or dry conditions brought about in old age, they also delay the development of exercise.

One of the most obvious changes that occur with increasing chronologic age is the change in body dimensions. With the aging process are mainly changes in height, weight and body composition, making it difficult to carry out various activities.

With this, it is noted that: [...] The role of physical activity has modified the changes in weight and body composition related to age. [...] The subjects that are classified as most active have lower body weight, body mass index, body fat percentage and waist / hip ratio than individuals of the same sedentary age.

Physical activity is also associated with better mobility, functional capacity and quality of life during aging. It is important to emphasize, however, that, as important as encouraging the practice of regular aerobic physical activity or muscle-building, changes to the adoption of an active lifestyle on a day-to-day life of the individual is a fundamental part of a stale with health and quality.

The collective subject discourse the central idea 02 shows that with advancing age in some elderly may have some diseases, and physical activity can help prevent some diseases, and minimizing the effects of existing disease.

One can not think today in "prevent" or minimize the effects of aging without that, besides the general health measures, to include physical activity. The positive effect of an active lifestyle and / or the involvement of individuals in programs of physical activity and exercise in preventing and minimizing the deleterious effects of aging are notorious and expressed in several epidemiological studies.

Finally Figure 7 with the core idea shows that 01 participants physical activity group, seem to give importance to the interaction between the participants and the amount of people showing the importance of group development. The activities developed in group health and community is an important...
tool for promoting health and prevention, as well as has a role in rehabilitation.

It is observable that elderly people who practice physical exercises become more responsive, with improved mood, emotionally balanced and produce positive activities in relation to the facts of life, thereby contributing to quality of life and healthy aging.

In central idea 02, the speeches of survey participants report, your suggestions on how to improve the physical activity group, show interest in increasing complexities of the activities offered by the group, as well as describe what could be done to achieve improvements.

Choosing a healthy lifestyle, with the adoption of regular exercise and a better social relationships, promote successful aging, thus reducing the disabilities associated with aging. Thus, the activity performed favors better interaction with the older group together.

In 03 the central idea Collective discourse shows that there is a desire to have a follow up with a physical therapist to help with the improvements afforded by exercise. The therapist becomes of paramount importance to provide the goals to be achieved.

CONCLUSION

After checking the results, we conclude that the elderly have similar conceptions and positive about exercise and quality of life, knowing that a regular practice helps in improving your health.

One of the reasons for entering into the physical activity group mentioned by the elderly is the ability to perform physical activities, aiming to improve their health and minimization characteristics of chronic diseases that many have.

It is understood that the practice of regular physical activity is extremely important for the quality of life for seniors. Thus, guidelines should be made for achieving and maintaining an active lifestyle.

With the completion of regular physical activity are recognized numerous benefits that are exerted on the biological, psychological and social needs of seniors, aiming to improve efficiency and / or maintain and / or slow the decline in levels of functional ability in the elderly. The practical activities in long term and continuously are required to remain the benefits gained by the practice of regular physical activity.

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