

# Research Article Critique

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## Title

### Article Critique: The Effects of Exercise on Mental Health Among College Students

## Introduction

The research article *The Effects of Exercise on Mental Health Among College Students* by Dr. Laura Stevens (2023) investigates how regular physical activity influences stress, anxiety, and depression levels in college-aged individuals. The study aims to explore whether exercise can serve as an effective intervention for improving mental well-being. This critique evaluates the article's purpose, research design, findings, strengths, weaknesses, and overall contribution to the field.

## Summary

Stevens (2023) conducted a mixed-methods study involving 200 college students from three universities. Participants completed mental health questionnaires before and after participating in an eight-week exercise program. The study found that students who engaged in at least 30 minutes of moderate exercise five days a week experienced a 25% reduction in reported stress levels and a 20% decrease in symptoms of anxiety and depression. Qualitative interviews revealed that students felt more energized and focused after regular exercise. The author concludes that incorporating structured physical activity into students' routines can significantly improve mental health outcomes.

## Critique

## **Research Methodology**

The study uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data from surveys and qualitative insights from interviews. This design provides a comprehensive understanding of the topic. The use of standardized mental health scales enhances the reliability of the data. However, the sample consists mostly of students from urban universities, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to rural or non-traditional student populations. Including a control group could have further strengthened the research.

## **Strengths**

One of the article's main strengths is its practical relevance. By focusing on college students, Stevens (2023) addresses a population at high risk for mental health challenges. The use of both quantitative and qualitative data provides a holistic view of how exercise impacts mental health. The clear presentation of statistical results, supported by well-organized tables and graphs, makes the findings accessible to readers. Additionally, the qualitative interviews add depth, illustrating how exercise contributes to students' overall well-being beyond numerical data.

## **Weaknesses**

Despite its strengths, the article has some limitations. While the study demonstrates a correlation between exercise and improved mental health, it does not address potential confounding factors, such as participants' dietary habits, sleep quality, or social support systems. The duration of the exercise program, though beneficial, may not reflect long-term effects. Furthermore, the article could have provided more details on how the exercise program was tailored to accommodate students with varying fitness levels.

## **Author's Style and Tone**

Stevens (2023) writes in a clear, professional tone, making the article suitable for both academic and general audiences. The language is straightforward, with minimal use of technical jargon, which enhances readability. However, incorporating more engaging narratives from student participants could have made the article more relatable.

## **Conclusion**

Stevens' (2023) *The Effects of Exercise on Mental Health Among College Students* provides valuable insights into the positive relationship between physical activity and mental well-being. The study's mixed-methods design, practical focus, and clear presentation are notable strengths. However, addressing confounding factors, expanding the sample diversity, and considering long-term effects would further enhance the research. Overall, the article serves as a useful resource for educators, health professionals, and policymakers seeking to promote mental health in college environments.

## **References**

Stevens, L. (2023). *The effects of exercise on mental health among college students*. *Journal of Mental Health Research*, 28(3), 145–162