

Example of understanding lifestyle modification: my personal experiences in manag...

[Family](#)



Institution Understanding Lifestyle Modification: My Personal Experiences in Managing Chronic Back Pain through Healthy Diet and Physical Exercise

A. Personal response

However escapist I may sound, I did have a host of factors contributing to my poor eating habits and lack of exercise. On top of being a mother of two small kids (2 and 5 yrs old), I am working part time and studying in school full time. Due to busy schedule, I have little or no time for exercise and paid no attention to healthy eating regimen. On and off, I did attempt to follow healthy eating regimen, but intrapersonal challenges made it hard for me to adjust and stay with healthy eating habits.

Perhaps related to my lifestyle habits of poor eating and no exercise, I have back pain since 2009 and the pain is always triggered with long sittings, standings, and walks. It has affected my life as it interfered with my job as an RPN, family life, and social interactions. I always have complaints about pain and in frustration sometimes have arguments with my husband when he gets tired with my pain complaints. I avoid going out for long periods, even if it is a walk with my husband or family. I get frustrated with kids sometimes, which makes me feel very guilty of not doing the activities with them that they actually need.

When the opportunity to make lifestyle modifications that are consistent with general recommendations for healthy living came along in the form of schoolwork, I made a genuine and serious effort for the duration of one week as suggested in the assignment. I ate foods from the four groups to balance my diet. For instance, On Sunday I took a bowl of cold cereal and a glass of

2. 25% milk for breakfast. I eat cooked okra with a single naan and lettuce and cucumber salad for lunch. Moreover, I eat chickpeas with rice and salad for dinner and one apple of almonds before lunch. Therefore, I made certain that I consumed fruits and vegetables each day. I also consumed milk, meat, and grain products. I made certain that I balanced my diet subsequent days as shown in my routine (Table 1).

As part of my lifestyle modification, I engaged in different exercises to be physically fit as illustrated in Table 1. On Monday, I exercised for 10 minutes on the treadmill. In addition, I did lower extremities stretches for 15 minutes the same day. On Tuesday, I cycled in the evening for 10 minutes. In addition, I took a 30 minutes' walk from school. On Wednesday, I went to physiotherapy for 30 minutes and learned how to do easy stretches.

Moreover, on Thursday, I did neck stretches for 5 minutes and hamstring muscle stretching for 10 minutes. On Friday, I meditated for 10 minutes in the morning and walked for 20 minutes in the evening. Further, on Saturday I had a massage for 30 minutes and did back stretches for 10 minutes.

Lastly, on Sunday, I did routine backstretches. I also ran on the treadmill for 20 minutes.

In my case, little or no improvement in back pain is noticeable after one full week of starting exercises. The back pain is as intense and frequent as before starting lifestyle modifications enumerated above. To garner a discernible improvement in back pain, it is possible that a long-term practice of the lifestyle modifications is required in my situation.

B. Relevant Scholarly Literature

Lifestyle habits such as excessive drinking, smoking, little or no exercise, and poor eating behaviors have contributed to an increase in the prevalence and incidence of chronic diseases. Researchers have attributed a wide range of chronic diseases including obesity, diabetes, muscular pain, and cancer with poor eating. Lifestyle modification refers to incorporating changes into previously accustomed routines that can be important to improving the wellbeing and health of an individual. As a result, lifestyle modification programs have been designed, recommended, and implemented in an effort to change daily activities and eating habits of interested individuals.

Dietary interventions are used to change eating habits and reduce the risk for chronic diseases. The Canadian Food Guide states the recommended amount and kinds of foods that comprise a healthy diet. People should eat balanced diet by consuming foods that contain vegetables and fruits, grain products, milk and proteins.

Research suggests that motor control exercise produce short-term improvements in global perception of recovery and activity, but not pain, for people with chronic lower back pain. Most of the effects observed in the short term are maintained for periods of 6 to 12-months (Costa et al., 2009). Consequently, patients with low back pain should perform exercises that differ in intensity and technique to enhance muscle strength and balance (Chung, Lee & Yoon, 2013). Stabilization exercises that concentrate on muscle control, strength and mobility control are used to treat low back pain. The exercises improve the functioning of the nervous system and muscular system and hence control and protect the spine. The exercises improve

control over the pelvis and lumbar spine. The exercises can be performed using different positions and the co-contraction of MF muscles and abdominal muscles. Stabilization exercises are significant in improving the activation pattern of trunk muscles and thus relieve lumbar pain (Chung, Lee & Yoon, 2013).

Unstable training tools including balls can be used to make exercises difficulty using different body weight and opposition from free- weight (Chung, Lee & Yoon, 2013). Exercises that utilize balls use all body areas while exercises carried out on fixed floor do not use all body areas. Balls can enhance the steadiness, flexibility, and balance of the spine to avoid damage. This was evidenced in a study reviewed by Chung, Lee, and Yoon (2013). The researchers provided spinal stabilization exercises for 12 weeks. Patients used balls to exercise. The researchers found using balls relieved back pain and reduced the inflex- relaxation disorder. The exercises strengthened the MF muscle and improved balance.

Chung, Lee, and Yoon (2013) examined the impact of stabilization exercise utilizing a ball on multifidus cross sectional area in people with chronic low back pain. The researchers implemented a stabilization exercise program for eight weeks. 12 participants took part in the program. The patients exercised for three days in a week. The study findings showed changes in cross-sectional area of the MF after exercising. Also, patients in the experimental group showed a reduction in weight bearing from 9. 25 percent to 5. 83 percent. Patients in the control group depicted a reduction in weight bearing from 9. 35 percent to 4. 25 percent.

Research studies also examined the reasons why people adopt an inactive

lifestyle (Gómez-López, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010). The study detailed the main characteristics of university students' inactive lifestyle following a questionnaire on the analysis of sports habits and lifestyle. The study findings point out that there are diverse reasons for this (Gómez-López, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010). The prime external barriers included the lack of time. Internal barriers such as not linking the physical activity, not seeing its practicality or usefulness, feeling lazy or apathy are also contributing factors. Other reasons such as the lack of social support and differences based on gender with respect to motivation are also contributing factors (Gómez-López, Gallegos, & Extremera, 2010).

C. Discussion

People are supposed to exercise for at least 30 minutes daily in order to be physically fit. There is a wide range of exercises such as walking, cycling among others. However, intrapersonal challenges including back pain made it hard for me to exercise. I did not include exercises that reduce back pain in my routine due to lack of knowledge and hence the reason I experienced back pain when I exercised. The exercises I did were not effective in relieving back pain. The interpersonal challenges included lack of time and social support (Fitzgerald & Spaccarotella, 2009). I can claim that I did not have adequate time to exercise, and I cannot say that I did not get support from friends and family members. The facilitator at the gymnasium I was using did not have sufficient knowledge of exercises for people with low back pain. Chung, Lee, and Yoon (2013) concluded that stabilization exercises utilizing balls increase the cross-sectional area of the MF segment, enhance weight bearing, and relieve pain. Also, the exercises help patients recover from

functional disorders. The exercises increase the cross-sectional area of MF of the L5 and L4 segment in patients with low back pain. Thus, I should engage in stabilization exercises in the future to relieve back pain and ensure I am physically fit. I will use a ball to exercise and make sure all body parts are involved.

I need to modify some aspects of my lifestyle to reduce the back pain that has become persistent in my life. I must avoid long sitting sessions or standing and walking for prolonged periods. It reduces the pain incidences that are vital in avoiding the antagonism this back pain creates in my home due to my inability to attend to my family that sometimes makes my husband uncomfortable and angry.

Overall, my husband is supportive, but cannot help with the back pain condition. In order to make the changes in my lifestyle work effectively, physiotherapy and stretches learned from physiotherapist need to be incorporated into my exercises. The biggest challenge for me is finding time to do exercises and find time to cook healthy food. Perhaps, I can use family support as my facilitator. Very soon, I hope to avoid calling sick at work place whenever pain triggered becomes unbearable. I am sure that husband encourages me to do exercises while he will care for kids and will be more helpful in doing household chores. In this regard, my situation is akin that of the university students described in the study by Gómez-López, Gallegos, & Extremera (2010). Lack of time is the prime reason for my poor exercise lifestyle.

It is also crucial that I alert some of my workmates and senior personnel at my workplace so that I can be permitted some time off to exercise since

sitting for long is a major trigger for this pain. I also need to adjust my daily time schedules especially after work so that I spare more time for exercise and cooking healthy diet as prescribed by professionals.

I will adhere to these adjustments since I have discovered that personal barriers to healthy lifestyle are my biggest impediment to eradicating the back pain. In my exercises, I will incorporate such programs like ball exercises that are necessary in enhancing the muscle strengthening and spinal stabilization (Chung, Lee & Yoon, 2013).

It is also imperative to engage in-group activities with friends that are also experiencing similar problems. Such friends provide peer support that is vital in increasing the levels of enthusiasm. It reduces the feelings of self-guilt where one perceives herself as not living in accordance to social norms (Ferrer, Cruz, Burge, Bayles & Castilla, 2014).

References

- Chung, S., Lee, J. & Yoon, J. (2013). Effects of stabilization exercise using a ball on multifidus cross-sectional area in patients with chronic low back pain. *Journal of sports science and medicine*, 12: 533-541.
- Costa, L. O., Maher, C. G., Latimer, J., Hodges, P. W., Herbert, R. D., Refshauge, K. M., & Jennings, M. D. (2009). Motor control exercise for chronic low back pain: a randomized placebo-controlled trial. *Physical Therapy*, 89(12), 1275-1286.
- Ferrer, R., Cruz, I., Burge, S., Bayles, B. & Castilla, M. (2014). Measuring capability for healthy diet and physical activity. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 12(1): 46-56.
- Fitzgerald, N., & Spaccarotella, K. (2009). Barriers to a Healthy Lifestyle: From <https://assignbuster.com/example-of-understanding-lifestyle-modification-my-personal-experiences-in-managing-chronic-creative-writing/>

Individuals to Public Policy—An Ecological Perspective, 47(1)

Gómez-López, M., Gallegos, A. G., & Extremera, A. B. (2010). Perceived barriers by university students in the practice of physical activities. *Journal of sports science & medicine*, 9(3), 374. Appendix

Table 1