

End game: Sport can ease the transition into retirement

June 2 2015

Retirement is an important milestone in a person's life. Adjusting to the many changes retirement brings can mean the difference between a positive quality of life and one that struggles under the weight of change. A new study from a University of Houston researcher examined sport and its ability to impact the quality of life of a person as he or she transitions to retirement. This can mean participating in informal sporting activities, organized individual/team sport competition, or things like running, cycling or shuffleboard.

"We know that sports can enhance the development of children and adolescents, but the dynamic that comes with sport may be beneficial to the development and well-being of adults as they age," said David Walsh, clinical assistant professor in the UH Department of Health and Human Performance. "Retirement can set us on a positive or negative trajectory, depending on how we adapt. Sport can play a positive role in adults' continued development." David Walsh

Walsh interviewed more than 250 individuals in a Texas [retirement](#) community with the overarching question: Does sport have the capacity to influence the development process of a person later in life?

"In my work, people shared experiences of when sport played a significant role in life-events, such as changes in careers, going away to college, growing families or the death of a loved one," Walsh said. "These significant transitions required a positive response in order to deal with them, and applying this theory that sport serves as a positive

response made sense when a person retires."

His study found that when sport was applied to these challenging transitions, particularly during retirement, the adjustments were smoother. Participants felt as if they belonged to a community, were escaping perceived chaos or given more control in their lives.

"Transitions brought tangible and intangible losses to participants, particularly to their sense of self," he said. "Sport was found to be a resource-rich system they sought out because of what they thought it could do for them—bring self-confidence, social interaction and physical activity. This can be applied to the transition of retirement."

Walsh will present his findings at the 2015 Conference of the North American Society for Sport Management in Ottawa.

He says the study can inform sports managers to design sport for a targeted population with the intent of enhancing their quality of [life](#). Additionally, he's hopeful this research will be the starting point for additional studies on the relationship between sport and its impact in easing the transition into retirement.

Provided by University of Houston

Citation: End game: Sport can ease the transition into retirement (2015, June 2) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-06-game-sport-ease-transition.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.