



Public Perception of the Benefits of Walking for Weight Loss
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Abstract

This study aims to identify public perceptions of the benefits of walking in losing weight, especially in the Cimahi City community. Walking as a form of light physical activity is considered to have great potential in supporting a healthy lifestyle and weight loss. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews with 10 informants with different age and occupational backgrounds. The results of the study indicate that most people are aware of the benefits of walking in maintaining fitness and supporting weight loss, although not all respondents directly use walking as the main method for dieting. The driving factors underlying walking activities are convenience, low cost, and habits in daily activities. Meanwhile, the obstacles that are often faced are weather conditions, laziness, busyness, and negative social perceptions of walking activities. These findings show that walking has a recognized health value, but still requires wider environmental support and education so that people consistently make this activity part of a healthy lifestyle.

Keywords: public perception, walking, weight loss, physical activity, health

INTRODUCTION

A change in modern lifestyle that characterized by the increase in sedentary activities, the use of motor vehicles, and the consumption of fast food have contributed significantly to the increase in overweight and obesity cases in various countries, including Indonesia,(Bull et al., 2020).

Perception is an individual's cognitive process in interpreting, organizing, and giving meaning to stimuli or information received through the five senses,(Walgito, 2020). In the context of health, perception is formed through subjective experiences, beliefs, and knowledge that a person has,(Hollman et al., 2022). According to some experts, perception is a psychological process that allows individuals to recognize, interpret, and understand information received from the environment, with the aim of forming an assessment or conclusion.(Robbins, S., 2023). Mechanism of Perception Formation, Perception develops through three critical phases, namely:(Luthans, 2021). 1) Selection (*Selection*) – individuals sort information based on relevance and interest. 2) Organizing (*Organization*) – The brain organizes raw data into a more structured pattern. 3) Interpretation (*Interpretation*) – Giving meaning to the information that has been processed,(Luthans, 2021).

Public perception of the benefits of walking in losing weight is an important issue, considering that walking is a simple, easily accessible, and significant form of physical activity.

Physical activity can be categorized into three, namely, light physical activity, moderate physical activity, and heavy physical activity,(Dhiyah et al., 2024). Walking physical activity is a light physical activity that can be done by all groups,(Rusminarni, 2023).

Based on data from the Basic Health Research (Rikesdas) in 2018, the prevalence of obesity in the Indonesian population continues to show an increasing trend, with the prevalence in adult women reaching 29.3% and men at 14.5%. This condition is a serious challenge in the field of public health, because obesity is closely related to the risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes mellitus, hypertension, and coronary heart disease.(Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia, 2018). One of the recommended non-pharmacological approaches to weight loss is through regular physical activity,(Carlson et al., 2020).

Walking is a physical activity in the form of moving from one place to another by stepping on the feet in succession, where at all times at least one foot always touches the ground surface,(P., 2022). Walking is a form of light physical activity that is easily accessible, cheap, and can be done by almost all people without the need for special tools or facilities.(Park et al., 2022). This activity is also classified as light to moderate intensity aerobic exercise which is physiologically proven to be able to increase body metabolism, burn calories, and improve body composition.(Zurawik, 2020).

Some studies show that walking for 30 minutes every day can burn about 150–200 calories, depending on a person's weight and walking speed. If done consistently, walking can contribute to weight loss as well as overall physical fitness,(Park et al., 2022). Although the physiological benefits of walking have been scientifically proven, community participation in this activity is still relatively low. Data from the West Java Provincial Health Office (2022) shows that around 55.3% of the population of Cimahi City has a low level of physical activity, including in terms of walking. In fact, the local government has initiated various health promotion programs, such as walking and mass gymnastics, to encourage the community to be more active.

However, the level of community involvement in these programs has not shown optimal results, (PPID CITY CIMAHI, 2024). One of the important factors that affect the low level of community participation in walking activities is the individual's perception of the benefits of these activities. Perception, as a cognitive process, involves the interpretation, organization, and giving meaning to information or stimuli received through the five senses,(Hollman et al., 2022). In the context of physical activity, public perception is influenced by various internal factors such as experience, beliefs, and motivation, as well as external factors such as social norms, environmental access, and information from the media.(Baldassar & Atkins, 2020). A positive

perception of walking can be a driver for individuals to make this activity part of their daily routine. Conversely, negative perceptions, such as the notion that walking is a low-class activity or ineffective for weight loss, can be a hindrance. Therefore, it is important to understand how people assess walking, both in terms of health benefits and the obstacles they face in doing so.(Vieira de Oliveira Salerno et al., 2025).

This research is focused on public perception of the benefits of walking in weight loss in Cimahi City. The main objective of this study was to identify the public understanding of the effectiveness of walking as a weight loss method and to analyze the factors that influence this perception. The results of this study are expected to contribute to efforts to promote healthy lifestyles and become the basis for more effective and local needs-based public health intervention policies.

METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach, with a case study design,(Sugiono, 2021). which aims to describe in depth the public's perception of the benefits of walking in weight loss. The qualitative approach was chosen because it was appropriate to uncover subjective meanings, personal experiences, and social interpretations that cannot be explained by numbers or statistics alone,(John W. Creswell, 2 C.E.) In this context, qualitative descriptive methods allow researchers to understand how individuals form meanings towards walking activities in their daily lives.

The subjects in this study amounted to 10 people who were selected using the purposive sampling technique, which is a method of determining informants based on certain criteria that are adjusted to the purpose of the research,(Lenaini, 2021)

The selection criteria include: (1) domiciled in the research area, (2) adulthood, (3) have experience or opinions related to walking activities. This technique is considered effective in qualitative studies because it allows researchers to obtain in-depth information from participants who are considered to best understand the issue being studied,(Palinkas, L. A., Horwitz, S. M., Green, C. A., Wisdom, J. P., Duan, N., & Hoagwood, 2021).

The data collection technique is carried out in three ways: in-depth interviews with open interview guides, participatory observation where the research process is directly on the phenomenon to be researched,(Waluyo et al., 2024). and documentation where to record additional information both in the form of photos, and field notes.

The data analysis technique used in this study is Miles and Huberman interactive analysis. This model has three components of analysis, namely data collection, data presentation, and conclusion drawn,(Technology et al., 2025).

1. Data collection, includes the process of sorting and focusing data from interviews that are considered relevant to the research objectives.
2. The presentation of data was carried out in the form of thematic narratives and direct quotes from informants.
3. Verification or drawing of conclusions involves validating data through
 - a. Triangulation method: by combining observation, interviews, and documentation.
 - b. member checking (ensuring the suitability of the researcher's interpretation with the informant), and
 - c. Discussion with the supervisor as an opinion expert.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Most informants admitted that walking provides health benefits such as maintaining fitness, improving blood circulation, and reducing stress. Six out of ten informants believe that walking is effective for weight loss if done regularly. The main reason for choosing walking is because it is cheap, easy, and flexible. However, most informants do not make walking the main strategy for dieting, but rather as part of the daily routine. The obstacles faced include the weather, busyness, and social perceptions that view walking as a low-class activity. These findings are in line with the Health Belief Model theory, which states that perceptions of benefits and barriers greatly influence a person's health behavior. Environmental and cultural factors have also been shown to play an important role in shaping habits.

CONCLUSION

The people of Cimahi City are generally aware that walking is a beneficial physical activity and can help lose weight. However, its implementation still depends on individual motivation and environmental support. Public education and improved pedestrian facilities are needed to strengthen the practice of walking as a healthy lifestyle.

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