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Physical Activity for the Elderly and Different Ways of Their Participation

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Editorial

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Physical activity levels have declined in recent decades due to technological advances and the increased use of electronic devices and robots that handle many physical tasks for us. This decrease in physical activity poses health risks for individuals of all ages. For the elderly, engaging in physical activities is important(VaezMousavi et al., 2025), but they often face challenges such as a lack of motivation and insufficient strength to participate in these activities(Izquierdo et al., 2025). It is essential to tailor physical activities to their specific conditions to help improve their overall well-being. Encouraging the elderly to engage in more physical activities presents a significant health challenge, particularly in developing countries(Kohl III et al., 2025). Various solutions have been explored to motivate older individuals to participate in suitable physical activities. Numerous articles have been published on the importance of seeking support and fostering relationships between humans and animals to promote both physical and mental well-being(Kim & Lee, 2025; Martins et al., 2023; Northrope et al., 2025). The relationship between humans and pets varies significantly across cultures and has existed since the dawn of human social life, whether in small or large communities. Coexisting with pets—such as dogs, cats, and birds—is a common practice worldwide. In recent decades, there has been a surge in research focused on using companion animals, particularly dogs, to assist in the physical and mental treatment of the elderly(Friedmann et al., 2025).

However, in Iran, cultural beliefs and policies pose challenges to implementing these health-promoting and therapeutic methods for seniors. Despite this, several suggestions can be made to enhance physical activity and overall health for the elderly within this context. Many elderly people may not have the conditions to keep dogs at home, but some solutions can be suggested. For example, we have animal care camps such as dogs in different cities of Iran, which are especially active with the voluntary cooperation of people. By observing cultural and legal issues, it is possible to take the elderly, especially the lonely elderly living in nursing homes, to suitable spaces outside the city and establish contact with dogs that are very social and establish deep and appropriate relationships with humans, and to do attractive walking and physical activity, of course under the supervision and cooperation of family members or volunteers serving in animal protection camps. This activity is a step towards promoting the physical and mental health of the elderly and helping stray dogs by going out and walking in nature, utilizing the effective connection between humans and nature. The current issue features an article discussing the impact of dog walking on the physical activity and health of volunteers at stray dog camps in the United States. Authors interested in this topic are invited to collaborate with us in

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publishing scientific articles from various perspectives that align with the journal's mission to promote the health of older adults.

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