

# PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN BRAZILIAN INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: A REVIEW

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**Area Temática:** Physical Education

**Introduction:** Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. Recent estimates show that about 1.5 million people have ASD in Brazil. Currently, there is no standard treatment for ASD, but there are many ways to minimize the symptoms and maximize abilities (e.g., physical activities). **Objectives:** This review aims to identify the benefits of physical activity for Brazilian individuals with ASD. **Methods:** This study adopted a qualitative synthesis model based on a narrative review and consultation of primary studies published in specialized scientific databases. Publications up to December 2022 were identified by searching the electronic databases: Latin America and the Caribbean Literature on Health Sciences (LILACS), Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO), and National Library of Medicine (NLM/Pubmed). In addition, data was found in the online repositories of Google Scholar and the Higher Education Personnel Improvement Coordination (CAPES) database. The criteria for inclusion were studies published in Portuguese carried out with Brazilian individuals diagnosed with ASD. **Results and discussion:** The electronic search retrieved  $\Sigma n = 12$  studies, of which  $\Sigma n = 2$  were excluded after screening by full-text reading. For the final analysis,  $\Sigma n = 10$  studies were included in the qualitative synthesis. In ASD individuals, the regular practice of physical activity can contribute significantly to the development of motor coordination, body awareness, social interaction, daily independence, and cognitive ability. When investigating the strategies implemented to increase the physical activity of these individuals, we obtained activities such as swimming, dancing, motor exercises, recreational activities, sports activities, and equine therapy in welcoming and adapted environments that favor learning and the improvement of motor, cognitive, and social skills. **Conclusion:** The practice of regular physical activity is beneficial for individuals diagnosed with ASD. Although, it is important to emphasize that the benefits obtained go beyond the physical sphere, covering socialization, life expectancy and quality, and the control of anxiety and depression.

**Keywords:** physical activity; autism spectrum disorder; physical exercise; autism