The following appeared in a health magazine published in Corpora.  
"Medical experts say that only one-quarter of Corpora's citizens meet the current standards for adequate physical fitness, even though twenty years ago, one-half of all of Corpora's citizens met the standards as then defined. But these experts are mistaken when they suggest that spending too much time using computers has caused a decline in fitness. Since overall fitness levels are highest in regions of Corpora where levels of computer ownership are also highest, it is clear that using computers has not made citizens less physically fit. Instead, as shown by this year's unusually low expenditures on fitness-related products and services, the recent decline in the economy is most likely the cause, and fitness levels will improve when the economy does."

Write a response in which you examine the stated and/or unstated assumptions of the argument. Be sure to explain how the argument depends on these assumptions and what the implications are for the argument if the assumptions prove unwarranted.

The health magazine article reaches the conclusion that the citizens’ fitness has worsened in recent years as a result of the declining economy, and that fitness levels will improve when the economy does. The argument is based on the premise that overall fitness is highest among the regions of Corpora where computer ownership levels are higher, and that the economy’s decline led to low spending on fitness products and services. However, in connecting these premises to the stated conclusion, the argument makes three unstated assumptions that must be addressed.

First, the argument’s author assumes that higher levels of computer ownership imply higher rates of computer use. However, it may be the case that, in the areas where a lot of people own computers, they may use them less. There may have been drives or seminars that encouraged people of these areas to reduce their screen time, and this could lead to such regions having lower levels of computer use. Also, if computer use was, indeed, detrimental to people’s fitness as stated by experts, then the assumption would prove unwarranted in this case, and the argument would break down. To address this assumption, the author must provide concrete evidence of a correlation between computer ownership and computer use, following which they may better frame the argument.

Second, the author assumes a direct relation between fitness-related expenditure and fitness itself. It may be possible that most of the people who regularly engage in fitness-related activities such as exercise, do not purchase new equipment. The fit people of Corpora may prefer methods of exercise that do not require any equipment – such as Yoga. If this were the case, then the decline in fitness may be falsely attributed to the decline in fitness-related expenditure among the citizens of Corpora. In addition, it may be the case that unfit people are more likely to buy equipment and fail to make adequate use of it to achieve their fitness goals. No substantiative evidence has been provided to indicate that the supposed correlation exists, and the argument does not take into account the ways in which people who work on bettering their physical state may not require equipment.

Finally, the author fails to consider reasons for the decline in physical fitness other than the one they have stated. They do not refute the experts’ claims of computer use being a possible cause, and provide no evidence that rules it out. Even if evidence proves that the experts’ conclusions are false, then there may be other possible causes. It could be the case that the recent years have led to poorer living conditions in Corpora, leading people to have unhealthy eating habits. There may have been an influx of population from a different region, which may be comprised of people who were relatively unfit. Such possibilities like living conditions and migration have nowhere been addressed in the argument, and if evidence can prove any of them, the argument’s conclusion proves false, irrespective of how accurate the experts are.

In conclusion, the argument, as it stands now, is considerably flawed due to multiple unstated assumptions, and ‘logic holes’ in the reasoning of the argument. The author should conduct or consult a comprehensive study on the fitness levels of the people of Corpora, considering all possibilities. Only through the provision of substantiative evidence in favour of the unstated assumption proving true, can the argument be justified. If evidence proves otherwise, then the argument fails.