

A Study to Assess the Level of Physical Activity in Young Adults at Puducherry

*Prof Supriya K Vinod, **MsRenugadevi T, ***DR JayastriKurushev&**MrMuthukumar

Abstract

Physical activity has enormous potential for improving the health of the Public. Physical activity is of primary importance in preventing diseases and in particular lifestyle diseases. Physical activity varies in intensity: light, moderate and vigorous. Moderate intensity is any activity done at a level which leaves the participant feeling warm and slightly out of breath, while vigorous intensity is “expected to leave the participant feeling out of breath and sweaty”. The purpose of this study was to assess the level of physical activity in young adults. 200 students in the age group of 18 – 25 years were selected for this study by convenience sampling and self designed questionnaire was given to all participants to gather information about their level of physical activity. The study results revealed that 51% of the students are in poor level, 32.5% are in good level and 16.5% are in better level of physical activity. Males appeared to be more active than female students.

Key words: physical activity, young adults

Introduction

“Those who think that they have no time for bodily exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness”(Edward Stanley).

Exercise is just one component of physical activity, and is defined as “planned, structured and repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness”. Regular exercise is also regarded as an important healthy lifestyle in which a large number of people can participate in order to impact significantly on their health status.

Three important factors affect total daily energy expenditure: 1) Physical activity, 2) Dietary-induced thermogenesis, 3) Climate. Within adults, physical activity has an important role in reducing cardiovascular diseases; preventing or delaying the development of high blood pressure; controlling and preventing diabetes; regulating weight; reducing the risk of osteoporosis and colon cancer; alleviating depression and anxiety; and

contributing to a positive sense of well-being.

When we think of a person who is physically fit, who do we see? An ultra marathoner, a sprinter, a weightlifter, a gymnast, a professional football player or may be a person with six pack. Physical activity assists in maintaining healthy body weight and has been shown to have psychological benefits such as improvement in control over anxiety and depression. Physical activity can be defined as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in energy expenditure”.

To become physically fit, individuals must participate regularly in some form of physical activity that uses large muscle groups and challenges the cardio respiratory system. Individual of all ages can improve their general fitness status by participating in activities that include walking, biking, running, swimming, stair climbing or training with weights⁽⁵⁾.

Despite the numerous benefits of physical activities, physical activity levels

are reported to be decreasing among young people in countries around the world, especially in poor, urban areas where it is estimated that less than 1/3 of young people are adequately engaged in physical activities. This decline is believed to be largely due to increasing common sedentary lifestyles, lack of emphasis on the importance of physical education and reduction in other school based activities⁽⁴⁾. This made the researchers to conduct the study.

Statement of the Problem

A Study to assess the level of physical activity among young adults.

Objectives

1. To assess the level of physical activity among young adults at Puducherry.
2. To compare the level of physical activity among male and female subjects.

Methods & Materials

A Cross-Sectional Survey was done among subjects aged 18 – 25 years in Indira Gandhi Arts & Science College, Puducherry & Co-operative College of Education, Puducherry. Convenience sampling technique was used to select the 200 subjects. A self reported questionnaire was designed by the researchers to gather information about their level of physical activity in young adults for past one month, and the questionnaire was validated by 4 health professionals involved in health service. Before including the subject a clear explanation was given to every individual participant, oral and written consent was obtained from the individuals. About 5-10 subjects were approached personally by the researcher and the questionnaires were distributed to every individual participant. Then questionnaires

were explained and filled up by them. Once the questionnaires were collected from the participants a thank you note was given to everyone.

Findings

Table 1: Distribution & Percentage of the Subjects Based on Gender

N=200

Gender	No of subjects (n)	Percentage (%)
Male	74	37
Female	126	63

As per data pertaining to gender out of 200 subjects participated majority 126(63%) of the subjects were females and the remaining 74(37%) of the subjects were males.

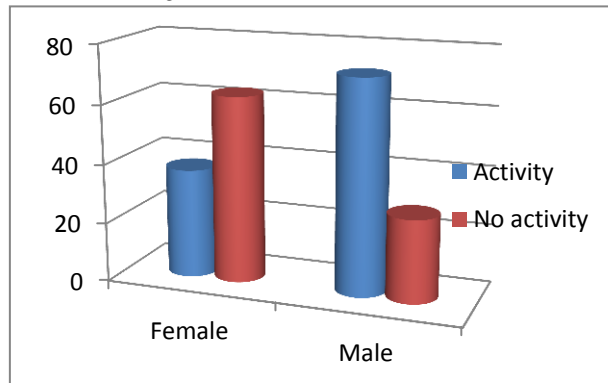
Table 2: Level of Physical Activity in Young Adults

N=200

Physical Activity level	No of subjects (n)	Percentage(%)
Poor	102	51
Good	65	32.5
Better	33	16.5

The above table reveals that majority 102(51%) of the subjects were in poor level of physical activity, nearly 65(32.5%) of the subjects were in good level of physical activity and minimum 33(16.5%) number of subjects were in the better level of physical activity.

Figure 1: Physical Activity among Male & Female Subjects



The above figure reveals that male subjects are more active than female subjects.

Discussion

The resultsshowed that 51% of the subjects were in poor level of activity, 32.5% were in good level of activity, 16.5% were in better level of physical activity. The resultsstated that male subjects were more active than female subjects. This coincides with the result ofthe study by Zimmermann- Sloutskis D,et.al⁽¹⁴⁾ and Leslie et.al. 2001⁽⁹⁾ as for allage groups, males had higher rates of participation for vigorous and moderate intensity activity than females, but females had much higher rates of participation in walking than males.

Recommendations

- **It is recommended that there should be educational programs which emphasize the benefits of exercise, prevention of chronic and cardiovascular diseases in future life and also incorporation of physical education in curriculum.**
- **Additional studies should be carried out to determine barriers to participation and access to facilities for enhancing physical activity among young adults inPuducherry.**

Conclusion

Majority of the subjects were in poor level of physical activity and only minimum number of subjects were in the better level of physical activity. The results states that male subjects are more active than female subjects. From the findings it is concluded that females have lower level of awareness regarding the benefits of physical activity than male. Hence it is recommended that strategies to improve awareness about the benefits of regular physical activity among young women must be initiated and active participation in physical fitness programsbe encouraged.

Also women should be enlightened on lifestylediseasesa ndtheirimpact on qualityoflife and alsotherole of physical fitnessprograms inpreventionof diseases like hypertension, type2diabetesme llitus,obesity, osteoporosis and ischemic heart disease some of which are more prevalent among women.The study concludes that young adults are not involved in adequate physical activities that could safeguard their present and future health and well being.

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