Levels of Physical Activity and Its Relation to Academic Performance of the First Batch (2017/18) of Students of the Faculty of Medicine, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka

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Physical inactivity is the fourth leading risk factor for deaths in the world, killing more than 5 million people every year. Many researchers have found that the physical activity level is correlated with academic performance of students studying at the Universities. During the recent years, this concept has gained a high importance, especially in the professional educational system. Hence the objective of the research was to find out the levels of physical activity and its relation to academic performance of the first batch of medical students who are studying at the Sabaragamuwa University. This study was conducted as a cross sectional study and 59 medical undergraduate students were recruited as subjects of it. The long form of the self-administered International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) was used to evaluate the levels of the physical activity. The academic performance was measured by using the preclinical subjects' marks of the two consecutive end semester examinations. Simple descriptive analysis and Chi-square test were performed to determine the strength of the relationships. Analysis of the IPAQ showed that the majority of the students reported as being moderately physically active (high = 13.6%, moderate = 57.6% and low = 28.8%). The results indicated that the percentage of students who passed the Biochemistry subject were similar in terms of the male (73.1%) and the female students (72.7%). But the percentage of students who passed the Anatomy (male=76.9%, female=72.7%) and Physiology (male = 80.8%, female = 63.6%) subjects were higher in terms of males when compared with their female counterparts. The result showed that, there was a higher prevalence of having a moderate level of physical activity among the students who passed the preclinical subjects (Biochemistry = 58.1%, Anatomy = 54.5%, Physiology = 61.9%). The prevalence of having a low level of physical activity among the students who passed the preclinical subjects (Biochemistry = 27.9%, Anatomy = 29.5%, Physiology = 21.4%) were higher than the prevalence of having a high level of physical activity (Biochemistry = 14%, Anatomy = 15.9%, Physiology = 16.7%). Using the Chi-square test, the study showed that there was no significant correlation between the levels of physical activity and the performance of preclinical subjects (Biochemistry $P = 0.965$, Anatomy $P = 0.60$ and Physiology $P = 0.119$). The study emphasized that, more than half of the students who passed the preclinical subjects were moderately physically active. Furthermore, it was revealed that the levels of physical activity had no influence on their academic performance.

Keywords: *International physical activity questionnaire, Anthropometric measurements, Body mass index, Self-administrated*