



Physical Activities and Health Education among Medical Schools' Students

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Abstract

Objective: To evaluate the effect of health education on practicing physical activities among medical schools' students.

Methods: Random samples were selected from different medical school's attitude towards.

Result: It was found that a high proportion of participants were able to fill in the questionnaire.

Conclusion: The study outcome is there is a significant increase in the negative attitude towards physical activities.

Introduction

There is a universal concurrence that physical activity (PA) plays a fundamental role in the social, physical, and mental development of people in society. PA is an important aspect of weight loss as well as weight maintenance. Research on the health benefits of PA established that physical activity is a significant health promotion tool that helps individuals to reduce the chances of developing chronic diseases. Therefore, with these health benefits in mind, it is essential that students are not only engaged in physical activities, but they should also be educated about its health benefits to enable them to have a positive attitude about PA. Students have a negative attitude towards physical activities (PA) and there is a need to adapt intervention strategies, such as educating students about the health benefits of PA to influence their attitude. This study analyses student attitudes towards their own health by performing research using students to establish the impacts of educating students about the health benefit of physical activity on their attitude towards their own health.

Literature Review

Shujaat [1] conducted research to establish the student's attitude towards PA and established that, while compared to other groups of the population, students have insufficient understanding of PA and its health benefits. According to research findings by Khan [2], about 40-50% of college students are physically inactive and this has contributed to massive health problems, such as obesity among students. Recent research revealed that most people become obese at the age of 35, which implies that the lack of PA during their time in colleges is the main cause of obesity in later life. The rate of obesity has increased considerably among college students in the recent past as a result of their negative attitude towards physical activity. Poobalan et al. [3] research indicates that students are more vulnerable to weight gain compared to other population members. Multiple studies on the health student's behavior towards physical exercise established that the vital aspect of weight gain among students is physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle, which is common among students. A research conducted on students eating habit established that a larger portion of students consumes an excessive amount of sugary drinks as well as a large amount of fatty foods while at the same time they consume lower levels of fruits, vegetables, and calcium than the recommended one Khan [2]. This is a clear indication that such unhealthy eating habits coupled with a sedentary lifestyle are the leading causes of obesity and weight gain among students [4]. PA is essential in maintaining the required level of energy needed to prevent obesity and therefore students must exhibit high level of physical activity. Several researchers have also analyzed the nature and characteristics of attitude as well as the student's attitude towards PA in terms of gender. Male students are shown to portray a positive attitude towards physical activity than female students [3]. Students who participate in sports activities also have developed a positive attitude towards physical activity and are healthier than those who are physically inactive. Researchers tend to controversially agree that educating students about the health benefits of physical activity can help them change their attitude towards PA and enhance their own health [1]. There is a need to establish the impact of physical activity, education on the student's attitudes on their own health.

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Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that educating students about the health benefits of physical activity within their own teaching would change their attitude about physical activity.

The Issue

Students have increasingly become disinterested in engaging in physical activities mainly because they are not well acquainted with the health benefits of participating in physical exercise. Students have a negative attitude about physical activity and this is considered a major health risk and the majority of them do not even participate in sports, which also a form of physical exercise [1]. There is increasing obesity among students owing to their unhealthy eating habits and sedentary lifestyle. In addition, there is a need to help students to create awareness about their own health and develop a positive attitude towards physical activity as an essential tool that can help in managing weight gain [3]. I have chosen this area because students are more vulnerable to making poor health decisions in life and also it is at this stage in life that students should be taught how to adopt better health practices that will help them reduce the chances of developing chronic diseases in later life.

Intervention Strategy

Educating Students about the Health Benefits of Physical Activity: Education can play an important role in helping students to adopt a positive attitude not only towards physical activity but also about their health [3]. It is an effective intervention strategy that health educators can use to show medical students evidence why having a positive attitude about physical activity can lead to both physical, mental, and social well-being. Cooper [5] addressed the importance of moderate physical activity and how important it is to provide young adults with regular physical activities

Methodology

Participants and sample size

A sample of 220 health students aged 18 to 25 years drawn from major medical schools were included in this study. Out of the 220 participants, 140 (64%) were male and 80 (36%) were female. The participants were randomly selected from five medical colleges that were also randomly chosen in the UK. The selection criteria were age, irrespective of whether or not a student has participated in the physical activity before. All the medical colleges selected had similar academic structures and sports facilities. A formal letter was written to all the colleges selected to seek approval to conduct a study. All the participants consented to participate in the study and they were assured of their confidentiality and freedom to withdraw at any point.

Data Collection

Data was collected through a questionnaire that was well designed and contained a maximum of ten questions ranging from demographic information to student attitude towards physical activity. Each participant was required to take at least ten minutes to complete the questionnaire. Data was collected before and after students were educated on the health benefits of physical education.

Results

The response rate was 95% as a total of 210 students responded to fill out the questionnaire. A small portion of those who responded, 5% left some incidental questions blank without giving an explanation. Out of the 210 respondents, 190 (90%) admitted that they are physically inactive because they have a negative attitude towards PA while only 10% (20 participants) are physically active. Out of 190 who admitted that they are physically inactive, 140 have never visited PA facilities or participate in sports activities within the school while 50 have visited but have never taken part. All the 190 respondents admitted that they have insufficient understanding

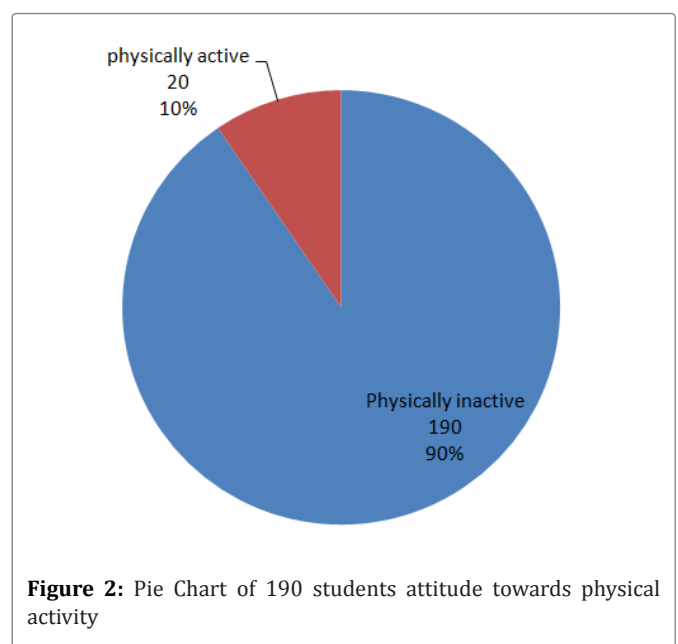
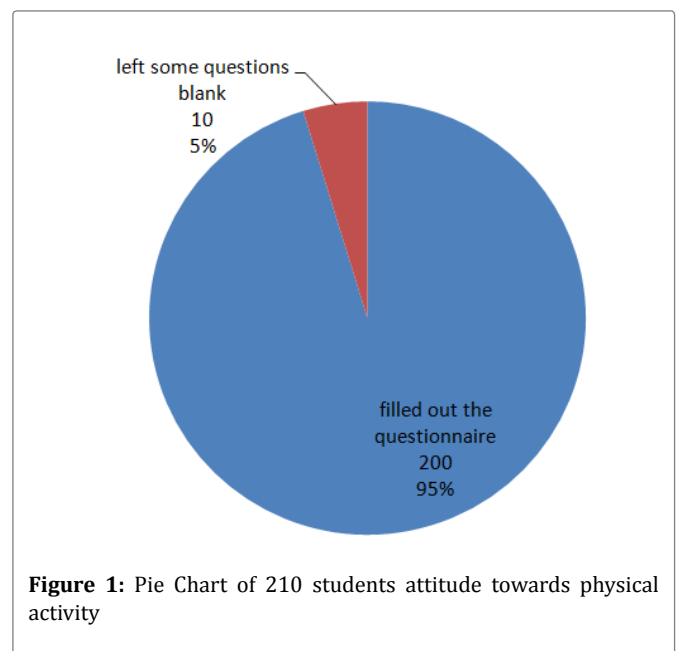
of PA and its health benefits. After all the 190 participants were educated about the physical activity and its health benefits their views were then collected to analyze the impact of health education as an intervention strategy to change student attitude towards their own health. The data collected after the education indicated that out of the 190 participants, 180 admitted that they have started taking an active part in physical exercise while only 10 students did not see the impact of education on their attitude towards physical activity (Figure 1 & 2).

Ethical Issues Relate to Educating Students as an Intervention Strategy

There must be informed consent from students where students must agree to participate in that education process without any coercion. The issue of mutual respect between the student and the teacher as well as respect for privacy is also likely to result in ethical problems.

Future implications

Health education may enhance awareness of the importance of physical activities among students and facilitate the creation



of effective behaviors [6]. Health education provides information about physical, psychological, emotional and social health. This motivates students to improve their health and sustain this, prevent disease, and reduce risky behaviors. Curricula and training in health education help students learn the skills they use to make healthy choices in their lives [7]. In addition to physical health prevention, health education can also provide more support and help people deal with conditions of extreme stress, anxiety, depression or other psychological problems to lessen the impact of these types of mental and emotional components, which can result in physical harm [8,9].

Conclusion

Health education is designed to assist people change their perception of health and attitude towards physical practices [10], health education may make a more significant contribution to young people's regular physical activities as physical activity and exercise can have immediate and long-term health benefits, all the necessary efforts should be made to encourage colleges to require daily physical education in each level and to promote physical activities that can be enjoyed throughout the academic year. More investments should be made in health education, work, and especially which will result in the improvement of quality of life and health of the population [11], various methods can be used to introduce physical activities in schools and education which should be focused on such as :- Nonsport after-school programs, intra- and extramural sports which sounds like a growing activity, community-based promotion programs, encouraging the students to use less the mechanical transports and try to walk to and from the medical school [12].

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