Research Article

Physical Activity and Health Risk Behaviours among Colleges of Education Students

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Abstract

Objectives: Decline in life expectancy and indulgence in health risk behaviours have been traced to physical inactivity. Physical inactivity exposes individuals to risk of a wide assortment of chronic illnesses. In order to address preventable illnesses among Nigerian youth through structured exercise programmes, baseline information on their physical activity level is inevitable.

Methodology: The study adopted descriptive survey designed. The population for this study consisted of the participants in Eruwa, 956 (910 students and 46 staff) and Lanlate, 1436 (1403 students and 33 staff) campuses of Emmanuel Alayande Colleges of Education, Oyo. Quota sampling technique was used to pick seven departments from four schools. In all, a total of 2392 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire forms administered. The instrument used was the modified Global Physical Activity Questionnaire developed by world Health Organisation. It collects information on physical activity participation in activity at work; travel to and from places, recreational activities and sedentary behaviour. Graphical presentations and percentages were used to discuss the data obtained.

Results: The finding from this study showed that 1680 (70.2%) of the respondents had the awareness that physical inactivity is one of the major causes of short life span in recent years. A high number of as much as 712 (29.8%) were not aware. 328 (13.7%) of the respondents actually participate in recommended at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity which is outrageously low compare to the 2064 (86.3%) that do not. 1208 (50.5%) had time to watch television for less than an hour per day, 568 (23.8%) sat for between 1-2 hours per day to watch television and 616 (25.7%) wasted more than two hours per day staring at the screen watching television. On smoking being good for healthy living, 556 (23.2%) agreed that smoking is good for healthy living whereas 1836 (76.8%) gave divergent response to the statement. 232 (9.7%) supported the idea that alcohol intake should be incorporated into the lifestyle of an individual while 2160 (90.3%) deviated completely from the view.

Conclusion: Physical activity level of colleges of education students is low. Their involvement in health risk behaviours is high. Hence, a compulsory physical exercise programme that can occupy them should be inculcated into the daily academic schedules of the students.

Keywords: Sedentary lifestyle, Watching television, Alcohol dependence, Smoking.

Introduction

Epidemiological studies have corroborated the unrelentless needs of physical activities (PAs) to enhance longevity as well as lessening infectious diseases (Blair and Church, 2004; Nusselder, Franco, Peeters, Mackenbach, 2009; Charansonny and Despres, 2010; Woodcock, Franco, Orsini, Roberts, 2011; Charansonny, 2011). Swerving trends of decreasing energy intake and increasing prevalence of obesity suggest that physical inactivity (PI) and sedentary lifestyle may be one of the key determinants of the growing rates of overweight/obesity in western populations' information about the impact of PI and sedentary lifestyles on the prevalence of obesity among the general adult population. World health organisation (WHO, 2012) reported that PI (lack of physical activity) was identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality (6% of deaths globally).

Current guidelines indicate that children should engage in 60 min or more of daily PA and the majority of the time should be spent performing moderate to vigorous intensity aerobic activities (United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2008; Strong, 2005). In order to improve cardiorespiratory and muscular fitness, bone health, reduce the risk of non-communicable diseases and depression, WHO (2012), recommends that adults aged 18–64 should do at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at
least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity; Aerobic activity should be performed in bouts of at least 10 minutes duration; and For additional health benefits, adults should increase their moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity to 300 minutes per week, or engage in 150 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic PA per week, or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity. Unfortunately, as exemplified above, the vast majority of youth do not achieve these physical activity recommendations (Burkhalter and Hillman, 2011).

Increased competition for leisure time stems from the use of sedentary materials (e.g. computers, television, video games), which may be of further detriment to physical health, as the average 8- to 18-year-old individuals spends over 5 hours/day in front of a screen (Roberts, Foehr and Rideout, 2005). Roberts, etal., (2005) opines that these trends remain as children progress through school; the average high school student accumulating over 3 hours of screen time daily. Other data indicates that these behaviors continue throughout life, with adults performing less physical activity (Health and Human Services, Healthy people, 2010) and more screen time as a function of leisure time activities learned during childhood (Gentile, 2009; Hancox, Milne and Poulton, 2004). The implications of these behaviors in adults are higher body mass index, lower aerobic fitness, and other ill health outcomes (i.e. increased smoking, raised serum cholesterol) (Hancox, 2004).

Most African population is rapidly adopting the sedentary work pattern as a result of civilization (Ebele, etal., 2009). Having a sedentary lifestyle leads to being overweight, and this can lead to diabetes or elevated blood pressure, both of which are risk factors for coronary heart disease (Nagara, Kondo and T. Shibata, 2001). Moreover, physical inactivity is estimated to be the main cause for approximately 21–25% of breast and colon cancers, 27% of diabetes and approximately 30% of ischaemic heart disease burden. The sports facilities in Oyo state colleges of education are gradually loosing standard as a result of under utilization on the part of students and staff. Not using those facilities could mean that the individuals in the community are physically inactive. Thus, they would be living unhealthy lifestyle despite the low turnout report gotten from healthcare centers in the schools. Hence the need to document the prevalence of physical inactivity and health risk behaviours in colleges of education.

Methodology

The study is a descriptive survey designed to examine the prevalence of physical inactivity and health risk behaviours among students and staff in Oyo state owned colleges of education. The descriptive survey enables the researchers to obtain the opinion of a representative sample of the target population so as to be able to infer the prevalence in the entire population. The choice of this design is justified because the researchers are interested in the prevalence among the people in the two colleges of education. The population for this study consisted of the participants in Eruwa and Lanlate campuses of Emmanuel Alayande Colleges of Education, Oyo. Quota sampling technique was used to pick 956 (910 students and 46 staff) from Eruwa campus as well as 1436 (1403 students and 33 staff) from Lanlate campus in 7 departments and schools. In all, a total of 2392 respondents completed and returned the questionnaires forms administered.

The instrument used for the study was the modified Global Physical Activity Questionnaire developed by world Health Organisation. It collects information on physical activity participation in activity at work; travel to and from places, recreational activities and sedentary behaviour. Graphical presentations and percentages were used to analyse the data that emanated from the study.

Results

Figure 1: Bar chart showing the respondents gender distribution
From the figure 1 above, 968 (40.5%) of the respondents were male whereas 1424 (59.5%) were female.

![Figure 2: Bar chart showing Age range of the respondents](image1)

Figure 2 showed that majority of the respondents (1456, 60.9%) were within 20-24 years of age whereas the age range of 30 – 49 years were only 27 (1.1%) which would supposedly be staff.

![Figure 3: Bar chart showing the Department of the respondents](image2)

The bar chart in figure 3 showed that 1456 (60.9%) of the respondents were in the primary education studies department.
Figure 4 showed that 1320 (55.2%) of the respondents were Christians, 1064 (44.5%) were Muslim and 8 (0.3%) were affiliated to other religions.

From figure 5, 1680 (70.2%) of the respondents had the awareness that physical inactivity is one of the major causes of short life span in recent years. A high number of as much as 712 (29.8%) were not aware.
A look at the illustration in figure 6 showed only 328 (13.7%) of the respondents actually participate in recommended at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic physical activity throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity which is outrageously low compare to the 2064 (86.3%) that do not.

Figure 7 showed that 1208 (50.5%) had time to watch television for less than an hour per day, 568 (23.8%) sat for between 1-2 hours per day to watch television and 616 (25.7%) wasted more than two hours per day staring at the screen watching television.
The bar chart of figure 8 showed the responses of the respondents on smoking being good for healthy living. Out of 2392 respondents, 556 (23.2%) agreed that smoking is good for healthy living whereas 1836 (76.8%) gave divergent response to the statement.

Figure 9 gave idea about what the respondents agreed upon based on alcoholic statement. 232 (9.7%) supported the idea that alcohol intake should be incorporated into the lifestyle of an individual while 2160 (90.3%) deviated completely from the view.
Discussions

This study showed that 1680 (70.2%) of the respondents had the awareness that physical inactivity is one of the major causes of short life span in recent years. A high number of as much as 712 (29.8%) were not aware. 328 (13.7%) of the respondents actually participate in recommended at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic PA throughout the week or do at least 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic PA throughout the week or an equivalent combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity activity which is outrageously low compare to the 2064 (86.3%) that do not. 1208 (50.5%) had time to watch television for less than an hour per day, 568 (23.8%) sat for between 1-2 hours per day to watch television and 616 (25.7%) wasted more than two hours per day staring at the screen watching television. On smoking being good for healthy living, 556 (23.2%) agreed that smoking is good for healthy living whereas 1836 (76.8%) gave divergent response to the statement. 232 (9.7%) supported the idea that alcohol intake should be incorporated into the lifestyle of an individual while 2160 (90.3%) deviated completely form the view.

This study presented that colleges of education students’ involvements in PAs was low due to their awareness level. A major threat is imminent when most of the potential labour ‘strengths’ of a nation are not acquainted with the needs for PAs. Charansonny (2011) reiterated that physical activity improves health and well-being. Woodcock, Franco, Orsini and Roberts (2011) admitted that PA reduces stress, strengthens the heart and lungs, increases energy levels, helps you maintain and achieve a healthy body weight and it improves your outlook on life. Research shows that PI can cause premature death, chronic disease and disability (Charansonny and Despres, 2010; Tinubu, Jaiyesimi and Mbata, 2009). PAs involvement of individuals in academic environment is shoddy. There are erroneous beliefs that the few ones participating therein are the “have nothing doing” or “not good” type. These beliefs encourage their sedentary lifestyles as well as involvement in health risk behaviours.

Conclusion

Physical activities should not be viewed as merely a desirable option in college of education system. It is an absolute necessity, and it must be built into the curriculum to ensure that all students participate fully in a programme that will challenge them close to their limits. Periodic and compulsory exercise awareness programmes should always be organized for students in the campuses.

References


