E-Poster

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Gender Differences in Physical Activity Habits Among Physiotherapy Students

Topic: Specific Target Groups (Children, Women, Elderly, Athletes, Musicians, Refugees, Ethnic Groups, Workers, and Others)

Dinko Kolarić[1], Ana Kolarić[1], Domagoj Sirovec[1], Luka Slivar[1], Dajana Lukić Demeter[1], Tea Medak[1], Tanja Kovač[2]

[1]*Department od Sport Special Rehabilitation Hospital "Daruvarske Toplice" Daruvar Croatia*
[2]*Department of Physoptherapy, Faculty of Dental Medicine and Health Osijek, Osijek, Croatia*

BACKGROUND

Kinesiotherapy is the most important form of physical therapy[1], and it is essential for physiotherapists to understand the significance of physical activity (PA) in both the prevention and treatment of musculoskeletal disorders. The aim of this study was to investigate the physical activity habits of physiotherapy students and compare them based on gender.

METHODS

This longitudinal, prospective study included 38 physiotherapy students with an average age of 22.4 years, representing both genders (57.9% women). All participants completed a validated questionnaire that asked about general demographics (gender, age) as well as frequency (a) less than once a week; b) 1-2 times a week; c) 3-4 times a week; d) 5 or more times a week), and type of physical activity (a) aerobic activity; b) strength exercises; c) group exercises; d) other). The number of participants was sufficient for valid statistical analysis. Significance in terms of exercise type and frequency was tested using the chi-square test, with a significance level set at $p < 0.05$.

RESULTS

Men were represented in all categories of physical activity intensity, whereas no women participated in the "5 or more times a week" category. Although more women (18.4%) than men (5.3%) exercised 1-2 times a week, the chi-square test suggested that gender was not a significant factor influencing PA frequency ($p = 0.24$). Women more frequently engaged in various types of exercises (they were represented in all categories), while men significantly preferred strength exercises (31.6%). There was a statistically significant relationship between the gender of physiotherapy students and the type of PA they preferred ($p < 0.01$).

CONCLUSION

Previous research indicates that the proportion of regular exercisers within the physiotherapy population is low[2], though the difference in our study was statistically insignificant. Differences in types of exercise have not been previously investigated in this population, but this study demonstrated that men prefer more anaerobic exercises, while women engage in all types of exercises equally, which may be explained by the greater emphasis on muscle definition in the male population.

There is no gender difference in the frequency of exercise among physiotherapy students, although male students tend to prefer strength exercises.

Statement of Disclosures

None

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Corresponding Author:
Dinko Kolarić
Department of Dtp of Sport, Institute: Special Rehabilitation Hospital "Daruvarske Toplice", Daruvar, Croatia
Email: dinko.kolaric@gmail.com