



Influences of Campus Environment Perceptions on Physical Activity of College Students

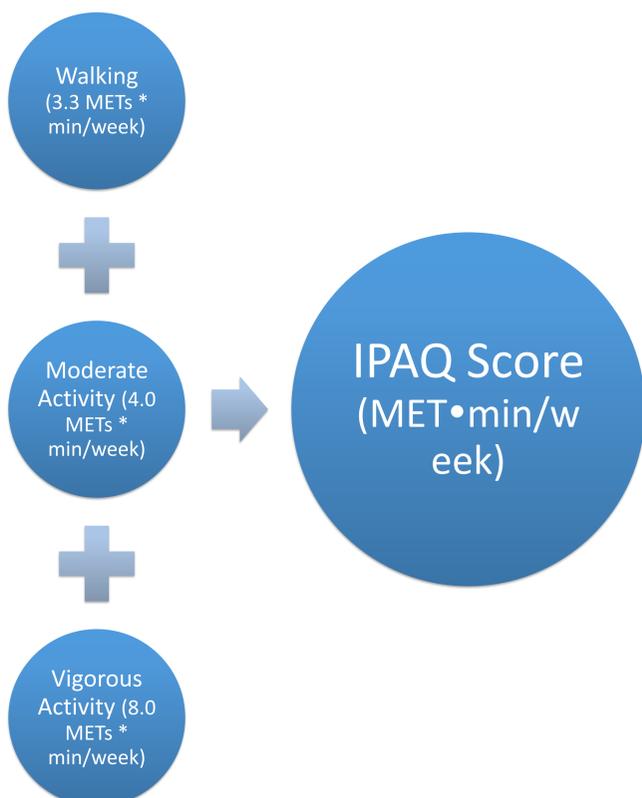
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Introduction

- As obesity levels continue to rise across the country, physical activity is all the more important in preventing and combatting this public health issue.
- Physical activity levels are commonly measured through the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) and then given a score.¹
 - Walking, moderate physical activity such as bicycling at a regular pace, and vigorous physical activity such as lifting weights, are taken into consideration.
 - A healthy IPAQ score is 500-1000 MET•minutes/week, which represents the amount of energy expended during physical activity throughout a given week.
 - This translates to 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity activity or 75 minutes/week of vigorous intensity activity, or an equal combination of the two.
- The objective of this study is to examine the environmental influences across campus on physical activity levels among college students.

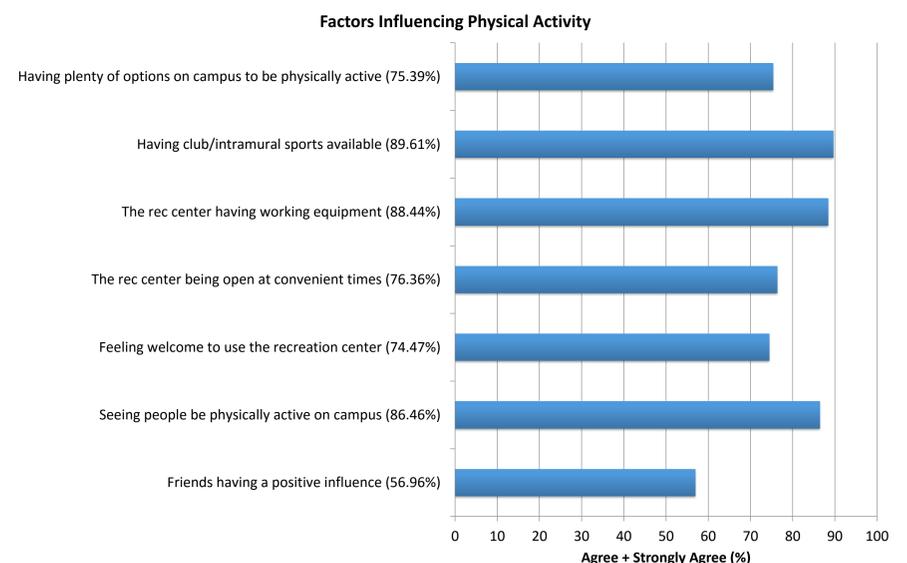
Methods

- Students at a large, Appalachian university completed a 118-question online questionnaire distributed through campus email on perceptions of health and resources across campus.
- Questions were generally about physical activity levels, perceptions of weight status, perceptions of campus health facilities and resources, eating habits, food insecurity, mental health symptoms, and drug and alcohol use
- IPAQ scores were determined based on the sum of self-reported, weekly total physical activity in terms of walking, moderate and vigorous activities.
- Frequency, bivariate, and multiple linear regression analyses were used.



Results

- Respondents (n=1758) had an average IPAQ score of 2259.07±1714.29 MET•min/week and were predominantly females (67.4%).
- When asked about influences on physical activity, the majority reported either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the following:



- All variables had a significant influence on IPAQ scores in bivariate analysis ($p < 0.01$ for all).
- In addition, females had lower than average IPAQ scores (2061.32±49.99 MET•min/week) and males had above average scores (2659.19±73.26 MET•min/week), with significant difference ($p < 0.0001$).
- The following remained significant when entered into a multiple linear regression:
 - Friends having a positive influence ($p < 0.0001$)
 - Feeling welcome to use the recreation center ($p < 0.0001$)
 - Having plenty of options on campus to be physically active ($p = 0.0395$)
 - Gender ($p < 0.0001$)

Discussion

- The results show that it is important to college students that not only are friends a source of motivation in being physically active, but also the sight of peers they do not know being active.
- Having an open, safe, and welcoming exercise environment, as well as different options is also important to college students being physically active.
- Females are not being as physically active as males, reporting IPAQ scores below the campus average. Males, on the other hand, are reporting higher than campus average IPAQ scores.

Conclusions

- Campus recreation centers should promote a welcoming and safe environment, and provide numerous options, including and especially group classes, to increase the number of students getting adequate physical activity.
- It is also essential that campus centers work to advocate for physical activity among young women.

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References

- Guidelines for Data Processing and Analysis of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) - Short Form. 2004 April. Available from: http://www.institutferran.org/documentos/scoring_short_ipaq_april04.pdf