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ARCHIVES ANNOUNCEMENTS

Home > Vol 37, No 4 (2007) > Zhao

Font Size:   

Comparison of physical activity between Olomouc and Beijing university students using an international physical activity questionnaire

Yan Zhao, Erik Sigmund, Dagmar Sigmundová, Yan Lu

Abstract

Regular physical activity (PA) reduces the risk of morbidity and mortality from a number of chronic diseases; however, the PA of a majority of adults does not meet minimal health related recommendations. University students' PA patterns had carryover effects on PA in their adulthood. The purpose of this study was to identify the differences in physical activity (PA) between Olomouc and Beijing university students. Methods – the International Physical Activity Questionnaire, which is long and in a self-administered format, was used to test the PA of Olomouc students (n = 482, 291 females and 191 males) and Beijing university students (n = 199, 84 females and 115 males). Basic descriptive statistics and the Mann-Whitney U test were applied to describe and compare the PA levels. Results – the prevalence of physical inactivity was 5.8% in the Olomouc university population and 15% in the Beijing university population. Male students in Olomouc reported as follows: (Mdn = 5682; M = 6456 MET – min/week), followed by Olomouc female students in Olomouc (Mdn = 3903; M = 5296 MET – min/week). In the Beijing sample, male students reported (Mdn = 2274; M = 2843 MET – min/week) which was also higher than the results of their female students (Mdn = 1504; M = 1981 MET – min/week). Most students in Olomouc (66.8%) are highly physically active, while most students (52.5%) in Beijing are moderately active. Conclusion – Olomouc students are more physically active than Beijing university students. Future research should develop intervention strategies to help more Chinese students adapt an active lifestyle. There should be a cultural modification of the questionnaire and a test-retest of the Chinese version of the IPAQ questionnaire.

Full Text: [PDF](#)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Reading Tools

Comparison of phy...

Zhao, Sigmund,
Sigmundová, Lu

Review policy
About the author
How to cite item
Indexing metadata
Print version
Notify colleague*
Finding References

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