

## Determination of factors associated with physical activity levels among adolescents attending school in Kuantan, Malaysia.

### Abstract

**Introduction:** Findings from the National Health and Morbidity Survey III (MOH, 2008) indicate a 43.7% prevalence of physical inactivity among Malaysian adults. This sedentary lifestyle can also be observed among children and adolescents. **Methodology:** A cross-sectional study was conducted to determine factors associated with physical activity levels of four hundred, 13 year-old adolescents in Kuantan, Pahang. Data on socio-demographic, health-related, and psychosocial factors were collected using a self-administered questionnaire while physical activity level was assessed using the Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children (PAQ-C). **Results:** About one-third of the respondents were in the low physical activity level category, 61.5% were in the moderate category and only 3.0% of the adolescents were in the high physical activity level category. Males were more physically active than females ( $\chi^2=23.667$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ) with female adolescents (45.1%) twice as likely as male adolescents (22.1%) to be in the low physical activity level category. The associations between physical activity level with socio-demographic and health-related factors, perception of weight status and body parts satisfaction were not significant. However, physical activity was found to be positively correlated with physical activity self-efficacy ( $r=0.496$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ), peer influence ( $r=0.468$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ), family influence ( $r=0.298$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ) and beliefs in physical activity outcomes ( $r=0.207$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ). Negative relationships were found between physical activity with depression ( $r=-0.116$ ,  $p=0.021$ ) and body size discrepancy ( $r=-0.143$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). Respondents who had a better perception of their current health status were more physically active ( $\chi^2=21.062$ ,  $p=0.0001$ ). Multivariate analyses for the prediction of physical activity showed that physical activity self-efficacy, sex and peer influence were the most significant contributors in explaining physical activity among adolescents. **Conclusion:** Physical activity interventions should include psychosocial components as mediator variables in interventions designed to promote regular physical activity in adolescence.

**Keyword:** Nutritional status; Physical activity; Adolescents; Health-related factors and socio-demographic factors; Psychosocial factors.