

The Effect of Covid-19 on the Physical Activity and Recreational Habits of University Students

TRINIDAD LEAL and DANIEL J. BURT

Human Performance Lab; Department of Health & Kinesiology; Texas A&M University - Kingsville; Kingsville, TX

Category: Undergraduate

Advisor / Mentor: Burt, Daniel J. (Daniel.Burt@tamuk.edu)

ABSTRACT

Due to COVID-19 a majority of states across the nation were put on lockdown, limiting the recreational activities an individual could partake in, like utilizing gyms and workout studios. Pre and Post-lockdown physical activity, fitness, and recreational habits could be measured through a series of questions using a Qualtrics survey. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study is to review how the COVID-19 shutdowns influenced the level of physical activity engaged in prior to and during the lockdown. Additionally, this study served to investigate how college students have decided to utilize their time recreationally during the pandemic. **METHODS:** Enrolled students in the College of Education and Health Performance fields were virtually sent an online survey asking about recreational habits before and after the Covid-19 lockdown. Subjects were also asked about time spent on classwork, television watching, video game use, and altered fitness routines and access. Subject data (30 males and 63 females) were returned to be utilized for data analysis through SPSS, and included undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in the Fall 2020 semester. Demographic and Paired-samples t-tests were used to analyze the received data.

RESULTS: Although there was an increase in usage, there was no statistical significant difference in the use of gaming during the lockdown ($p=.059$). However, there was statistical significant differences in employment ($p=.005$), sleeping ($p=.009$), personal virtual meetings ($p=.001$), television watching ($p=.001$), completing classwork ($p=.003$), exercise at the gym ($p=.001$), and home exercise ($p=.004$). There were differences in every category when comparing means, every category's mean predominantly rose in the lockdown, with exception of exercise in the gym and employment. Additional questions were asked on types of exercising locations and programming used before and during the lockdown. **CONCLUSION:** After evaluating the results of the surveys, a significant shift in behavior was seen in the from before and during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although we expected some categories to have a significant change, the majority of categories demonstrated considerable amount of alterations in behavior. Interpretation of these results determined that COVID-19 lockdowns may serve to place more active recreation activities at risk, but there is a propensity for individuals to use the time wisely and successfully in regards to certain health and school behaviors.