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24	Title: Physical activity and sedentary behaviour among inpatient adults with mental illness
25	
26	ABSTRACT
27	
28	Objectives: The aim of this study was to assess levels and patterns of physical activity and
29	sedentary behaviour among inpatient adults with mental illness.
30	Design: Cross-sectional
31	Methods: 101 participants completed questionnaires on time spent in walking, moderate-
32	and vigorous- intensity activity in the past week and domain specific sitting time on a usual
33	weekday and weekend day. 36 participants also provided valid accelerometry data.
34	Regression analyses were used to explore associations between MVPA and sedentary
35	behaviour and explanatory variables of gender, age, education, body mass index and
36	psychological distress.
37	Results: Self-report data indicated median of 32 minutes/day (IQR: 14.46–85.71) in
38	weighted MVPA and a median of 761 minutes/day (12.7 hours) (IQR: 552.43-917.14) in
39	sedentary behaviour. Accelerometry data indicated an average of 115 minutes/day in light
40	activity, 37 minutes/day in MVPA and 664 minutes/day (11.1 hours) in sedentary behaviour.
41	Bivariate analyses indicated no significant associations between explanatory variables and
42	MVPA and sedentary behaviour.
43	Conclusions: Inpatient adults with mental illness can be physically active, with walking
44	comprising the major component of MVPA time. Inpatient adults with mental illness spend a
45	significant amount of time sitting; intervention strategies could focus on reducing the time
46	spent sitting in general relaxation and doing nothing.
47	
48	Keywords: Mental health, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, accelerometers
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51 52	INTRODUCTION
53	The life expectancy of adults with mental illness is worse than that of the general population
54	and is largely due to poor physical health status ^{1,2} including obesity, type two diabetes
55	mellitus, hypertension, dyslipidemia and cardiovascular disease ^{3,4} . Low levels of physical
56	activity ^{5,6} and high levels of sedentary behaviour ^{7,8} may contribute to these poor health
57	outcomes and reduced life expectancy ² .
58	
59	Studies on physical activity and sedentary behaviour of adults with mental illness have
60	predominantly been carried out in community settings ⁹⁻¹¹ or subsumed in population-based
61	surveys ¹² . One Australian survey reported that 64.5% of a sample of 1,825 people with
62	psychoses were active ¹² , and another reported that 49% of 150 adults with schizophrenia
63	achieved >150 minutes of physical activity, with 44% of these achieving at least five
64	sessions ¹¹ . However, data from the 2007-2008 Health Survey of Australia indicated that
65	adults who had high or very high levels of psychological distress were less likely to achieve
66	at least 150 minutes/week of moderate intensity activity than those with lower levels of
67	distress ¹³ . Accelerometer data from 60 outpatient adults with bipolar disorder found that
68	participants averaged 14 minutes per day in moderate-vigorous physical activity (MVPA) and
69	13.5 hours/day in sedentary behaviour ¹⁰ . Another study concluded that 35% of 55
70	overweight/obese adults with severe mental illness did ≥150 minutes/week of MVPA, and
71	the average time spent in MVPA was 120 minutes/week ¹⁴ . Studies of adults with mental
72	illness suggest lower rates of activity among females, and those with low education and high
73	BMI ^{9,15,16} ; and higher rates of sedentary behaviour among those with high BMI ¹⁷ .
74	
75	Little research has purposively assessed physical activity and sedentary behaviour patterns
76	among inpatient adults with mental illness. The inpatient experience may influence
77	behaviour due to e.g. the impact of the hospital environment and a change in competing
78	time demands. Time spent in hospital is an opportunity to establish adaptive self-

management practices that can then be continued out of hospital. To inform hospital-based
interventions, we need to understand levels and patterns of behaviour. The aim of this study
therefore, was to assess levels and patterns of physical activity and sedentary behaviour
among inpatient adults with mental illness.
METHODS
This was a cross-sectional study. Participants were inpatient adults (18-75 years; N=101)
with mental illness recruited in two waves over an eight-month period from a private
psychiatric hospital in Brisbane, Australia. The hospital's daily inpatient census was
reviewed weekly by the lead author and the charge nurse to exclude patients who did not
meet the following eligibility criteria: (i) psychiatric diagnosis as defined by the Diagnostic
and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 5 th Edition; (ii) not experiencing acute psychiatric
symptoms; (iii) not acutely suicidal; (iv) not under an involuntary treatment order. Eligible
patients were verbally invited to participate at least five days after admission, to allow time to
settle into the hospital. Ethical clearance was awarded by The University of Queensland
Human Research Ethics Committee (2014000420).
Self-reported physical activity was assessed using a modified version of the Active Australia
survey ¹⁸ . Items assessed the frequency of and total time spent walking for transport, walking
for recreation and leisure, and in moderate and vigorous intensity activity during the previous
week. The Active Australia survey has been used in National and state surveys ^{18,19} and has
acceptable psychometric data with reliability coefficients ranging from 0.56-0.64 for each
domain of activity ²⁰ .
Self-reported sedentary behaviour was assessed using a modified version of a questionnaire
which asks about time spent sitting on each of a usual weekday and weekend day in (i)
travelling to and from places, (ii) at work, (iii) watching television, (iv) using a computer and

107	(v) leisure time ²¹ . The questionnaire has high reliability for weekday sitting at work, watching
108	television and using a computer (r = 0.84-0.78), but lower reliability for weekend days across
109	all domains (r = 0.23-0.74). To reflect the inpatient setting, leisure time was replaced with
110	general relaxing and five additional domains were added: (i) psycho-education group, (ii) art
111	therapy group, (iii) with a health professional, (iv) smoking and (v) doing nothing.
112	
113	Objective physical activity and sedentary behaviour were assessed using Actigraph GT3x+
114	accelerometers. Participants wore the accelerometer positioned on the right hip on a belt
115	around the waist for 24 hours/day for seven consecutive days, and record in an activity diary
116	the times (i) they got out of bed in the morning and went to bed at night and (ii) anytime they
117	took off the accelerometer and the time they put it back on.
118	
119	The Kessler (K6) scale ²² was used to assess psychological distress. It has been shown to
120	have good reliability ²³ and validity ²² . Responses were summed across items, which used a
121	five point Likert scale. A score of 6–18 indicated low to moderate psychological distress and
122	19–30 high psychological distress ²² .
123	
124	Sociodemographic variables were assessed using standard questionnaire items. Variables
125	included gender, age, household composition, employment status and education. Data on
126	weight and height (used to derive body mass index) and diagnosis were retrieved from
127	participants' medical records. As participants could be assigned multiple diagnoses, each
128	diagnosis was recorded.
129	
130	Self-reported physical activity data were included in the analysis if duration was available for
131	at least one questionnaire item. To avoid potential over-reporting, reported times greater
132	than 840 minutes (14hrs/week) for a single activity type were truncated at 840 minutes ¹⁸ .
133	Total self-report MVPA was calculated in weighted minutes/week by adding time in walking
134	for transport, walking for recreation and exercise, moderate- and vigorous- intensity activity,

135	with vigorous activity weighted by two to allow for its greater intensity. To further avoid
136	potential over-reporting, total MVPA times that were recorded as greater than 1680 minutes
137	(28 hours/week) were truncated at 1680 minutes ¹⁸ .
138	
139	Self-reported sedentary behaviour data were included in the analysis if reported duration
140	was available for at least one questionnaire item. Based on the authors' knowledge of the
141	hospital routine, times were truncated to 12 hours/day for doing nothing; 10 hours/day for
142	each of time spent watching television, using a computer, smoking and relaxing; 5 hours/day
143	for each of art therapy groups and with a health professional and 3 hours/day for psycho-
144	education groups. Total daily sedentary behaviour was derived by summing times across the
145	10 domains and to further avoid potential over-reporting, times greater than 1020 minutes
146	(17 hours/day) were truncated to 1020 minutes/day. Average daily sedentary behaviour was
147	calculated by multiplying the weekday sitting total by five and the weekend sitting total by
148	two, then adding the two sums together and dividing by seven.
149	
150	Actigraph software was used to analyse the data retrieved from the GT3x+ accelerometers.
151	Participants' day hours were defined by self-reported time out of bed in the morning and time
152	to bed at night. Data were considered valid if the monitor was worn for at least 10 day
153	hours/day ²⁴ on four days of the week, including at least one weekend day ²⁵ . Accelerometer
154	non-wear time was identified from participants' activity diaries and from consecutive zero
155	counts for 60 minutes or longer. The cut-point criteria used were 0–99 counts per minute for
156	sedentary activity, 100–2019 for light activity, 2020–5998 for moderate activity and 5999 or
157	greater for vigorous activity ²⁶ . Moderate and vigorous activity were combined and time spent
158	in sedentary, light and MVPA were calculated as average minutes/day.
159	
160	Five explanatory variables were considered to identify potential correlates of self-reported
161	MVPA and sedentary behaviour, including: gender and education (categorical measures);
162	and age, body mass index and psychological distress (continuous measures). Linear

regression was used to assess bivariate associations between MVPA/sedentary behaviour
and each of the five explanatory variables. Variables found to be associated at p<0.10 at the
bivariate level were to be considered for multivariable analysis. Analyses were conducted
using SPSS version 22.
RESULTS
During the recruitment, 276 patients were eligible for this study. Of these, 99 (36%) could not
be contacted due to e.g. appointments with health professionals or being on leave from the
hospital. This resulted in 177 (64%) patients being invited to participate. Of those invited,
118 (67%) consented to participate in the survey and 101 (57%) provided data; and 50
(28%) consented to participate in the accelerometry and 38 (21%) provided data, with 36
(95%) meeting the accelerometer wear time criteria ²⁴ . Reasons for survey non-completion
included early discharge from the hospital (n=10) and poor mental health (n=6). One
participant lost the survey and declined to complete another. Reasons for accelerometry
non-completion included poor mental health (n=5), early discharge from hospital (n=4) and
forgetting to wear the accelerometer (n=3).
For self report activity data, scores were truncated for 3 (3%) of the participants, with
extreme values identified for walking for transport (n=1) and vigorous intensity activity (n=2).
For self-report sitting times, 6 (6%) participants gave no data as they found it too difficult,
and of those who provided data (n=95), scores were truncated for 26 (27%) participants. The
proportion of participants with extreme sitting time values was higher for attending psycho-
education groups (18%) than other domains (<7% each).
Participants' demographic characteristics are summarised in Table 1. The mean age was
40.7 years (SD 14.5) and 72% were female. The majority (61%) had a depressive disorder
and 68% had a high level of psychological distress.

191	
192	Self-report data indicated a median of 32 weighted minutes/day (IQR: 14.46-85.71) in MVPA
193	and a median of 761 minutes/day (12.7 hours) (IQR: 552.43–917.14) in sedentary
194	behaviour. Accelerometry data indicated an average of 115 minutes/day in light activity, 37
195	minutes/day in MVPA and 664 minutes/day (11.1 hours) in sedentary behaviour.
196	
197	Self-reported time spent in physical activity is summarised in Table 2. There was wide
198	variation in time spent walking with a median of 60 minutes/week in each of walking for
199	transport (IQR: 10.0–131.25) and walking for recreation and exercise (IQR: 0–150). Walking
200	accounted for the majority of physical activity sessions, with one quarter of participants
201	reporting five or more sessions/week of walking for transport, and about one third reported
202	five or more sessions/week of walking for recreation. Median values for moderate and
203	vigorous activity were zero. Approximately 75% of participants reported no sessions of
204	moderate-intensity activity, and approximately half reported no sessions of vigorous-intensity
205	activity. There was also wide variation in weighted MVPA time with a median of 225
206	minutes/week (IQR: 101.25–600). Overall, 65% of participants who provided self-report data
207	met guidelines of at least 150 minutes/week of MVPA ²⁷ .
208	
209	Durations of self-reported sedentary behaviour are summarised in Table 4. The longest
210	reported sitting times were doing nothing on both weekdays (median 120 minutes/day, IQR:
211	60-240) and weekend days (median 120 minutes/day, IQR: 60-240), and with a health
212	professional (median 67.5 minutes/day, IQR 46.25–180) on a weekday. Data indicated a
213	median total time of 13 hours/day in sedentary behaviour on weekdays and 10 hours/day in
214	sedentary behaviour on weekend days.
215	
216	Accelerometry results indicated that participants spent an average time of 11.2
217	hours/weekdays and 10.8 hours/weekend days in sedentary behaviour; 1.85

218	hours/weekdays and 2.1 hours/weekend days in light activity, and 38 minutes/weekdays and
219	34 minutes/weekend days in MVPA.
220	
221	Bivariate analyses indicated no statistically significant associations between each of the
222	explanatory variables and self-report MVPA (gender: β =-0.079, p=0.446; education: β =-
223	0.050, p=0.632; age: β =0.019, p=0.856; BMI: β =-0.10, p=0.341 and psychological distress:
224	β =0.022, p=0.632) or sedentary behaviour (gender: β =-0.041, p=0.717; education: β =0.037,
225	p=0.748; age: β =0.073, p=0.523; BMI: β =0.088, p=0.445 and psychological distress:
226	β =0.059, p=0.607). Multivariable analyses were therefore not conducted.
227	
228	
229	DISCUSSION
230	This study indicates that adult inpatients with mental illness can be physically active, with
231	65% meeting the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines of at least 150 minutes per week ²⁷
232	and a median of self-reported MVPA of 32 minutes/day (IQR: 14.46-85.71). This self-
233	reported data was consistent with the accelerometry results, which indicated an average of
234	37 minutes/day in MVPA. Although our sample was predominantly comprised of people with
235	depression, these results are consistent with one previous Australian study of people with
236	psychosis living in the community which found that 65% were meeting guidelines ¹² .
237	
238	Our findings however, contrast other research indicating that the majority of adults with
239	mental illness are not meeting activity guidelines ^{10,11,14} . It may be that while in hospital,
240	inpatients are in a structured and supported environment and have had a change to
241	competing time demands, for example, work attendance. This would provide more
242	discretionary time for MVPA. As participants were voluntary admissions, they were able to
243	take leave, and it was observed that many people did so to walk to and around a nearby
244	shopping mall to have a break from the hospital. In our study, walking comprised the
245	majority of MVPA time, and few people engaged in other MVPA

246	
247	The results indicate that inpatient adults with mental illness have prolonged sitting time. Self-
248	report data indicated a median of 761 minutes/day (12.7 hours) (IQR: 552.43–917.14) in
249	sedentary behaviour, and accelerometry data indicated an average of 664 minutes/day (11.1
250	hours). These findings are similar to a previous accelerometry study of outpatient adults with
251	bipolar disorder that found an average of 13.5 hours/day in sedentary behaviour 10. However,
252	another study of outpatient adults with schizophrenia spectrum disorders found an average
253	of 6.75 hours/day in sedentary behaviour ²⁸ . The different diagnoses of participants across
254	studies may contribute to these study differences.
255	
256	More time was spent in sedentary behaviour on weekdays than weekend days. Self-report
257	data indicated a median time of 13 hours/weekdays and 10 hours/weekend days which was
258	consistent with accelerometry results of an average of ~11 hours/weekdays and ~10
259	hours/weekend days. This could in part be attributed to the time spent with health
260	professionals (median 67.5 minutes/day) and in psycho-education groups (median 60
261	minutes/day). Allied health professionals are more likely to work on weekdays and the
262	hospital facilitates psycho-education groups only on weekdays. Participants spent a median
263	of one hour on both weekdays and weekend days watching television. This is in contrast to
264	general population based studies in which watching television is a common context for
265	prolonged sedentary behaviour ²⁹ . For example, one general population study indicated the
266	average time spent watching television was 13 hours/week ³⁰ which is almost double the time
267	in our study. The short time spent watching television in our study may reflect the specific
268	hospital setting; inpatients have limited access to television; and are obliged to either use a
269	shared area or pay to have access to a television.
270	
271	The main area of concern for this population in relation to sedentary behaviour is the time
272	spent "doing nothing" on both weekdays and weekend days. While other hospitalized
273	patients with physical conditions may have movement restrictions, a psychiatric population is

274	typically ambulatory. There is a need therefore, to explore options for non-sedentary
275	activities on both weekdays and weekend days for inpatients with mental illness.
276	
277	There were no significant associations between explanatory variables of gender, education,
278	age, BMI and psychological distress and MVPA and sedentary behaviour which contrasts
279	other studies conducted among adults with mental illness ^{9,15-17} . This may reflect the inpatient
280	environment, however more work however is needed to confirm this finding.
281	
282	Caution should be used in generalizing the results to all mental health inpatients. Our study
283	was conducted in one private psychiatric hospital, and the majority had depression as the
284	primary diagnosis. Different results may have been obtained with a different mix of
285	diagnoses, for example if there were more participants with schizophrenia. The study
286	sample was not random, not all eligible patients were invited to participate, and not all of
287	those who consented completed the assessment. There was a potential for response bias
288	as the recruitment relied on volunteers; patients who had no interest in activity, or those who
289	had worse mental health might not have been included. Patients who were unable to be
290	located due to leave from the hospital during recruitment were not included. In order to
291	minimize participant burden and to respect privacy, data on severity of diagnosis and length
292	of stay in hospital were not included, and so cannot be reported. As self-report and objective
293	assessment was not conducted at the exact same time, we are unable to directly compare
294	methods of assessment. As there was no way to ascertain if participants walked or engaged
295	in physical activity at a sufficient intensity to constitute MVPA, self-reported MVPA may be
296	over-estimated and may not directly translate to MVPA as assessed by accelerometry. More
297	work is needed therefore, to compare self-report and objective measures of MVPA and
298	sedentary behaviour in people with mental illness.
299	
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301	

302	CONCLUSIONS
303	The study suggests that inpatient adults with mental illness can be physically active, with
304	many engaging in walking, in particular to have time away from the hospital environment.
305	However they spend a significant amount of time sedentary. This is important as prolonged
306	sedentary behaviour is associated with poor physical health and may contribute to reduced
307	life expectancy, which are more common among adults with mental illness than in the
308	general population. This study highlights the need for sedentary behaviour advice,
309	recommendations and interventions for psychiatric inpatients, in particular to redress time
310	spent doing nothing while in hospital.
311	
312	
313	PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS
314	• Inpatient adults can be physically active with 65% of this study population meeting
315	the Australian Physical Activity Guidelines of at least 150 minutes per week.
316	Walking is the most common type of activity.
317	Inpatient adults with mental illness spend a significant amount of time sitting each
318	day, often doing nothing.
319	Hospitals could explore options for non-sedentary activities on both weekdays and
320	weekend.
321	
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325	gatekeeper approval to access their inpatient population. No financial support was granted
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420 Table 1
421 Sociodemographic and health characteristics of participants

	Accelerometer	Survey
	n = 36	n = 101
Mean (SD) Age (years)	42.5 (13.6)	40.7 (14.5)
	n (%)	n (%)
Gender		
Female	30 (83.3)	73 (72.3)
Country of birth		
Australia	32 (88.9)	86 (85.1)
Household composition		
Single living alone	7 (19.4)	17 (16.8)
Single living with others / children	8 (22.2)	29 (28.7)
Couple without children	10 (27.8)	27 (26.7)
Couple with children	11 (30.6)	27 (26.7)
Employment situation		
Not working ^a	10 (27.8)	31 (30.7)
Pensioner on benefits (not old age)	10 (27.8)	27 (26.7)
Paid part time / casual work	6 (16.7)	21 (20.8)
Full time paid employment	10 (27.8)	21 (20.8)
Ability to manage on available incom	e	
Impossible / Difficult all the time	14 (38.9)	29 (28.7)
Difficult some of the time	10 (27.8)	39 (38.6)
Not too bad	9 (25.0)	22 (21.8)

Easy	3 (8.3)	10 (9.9)		
Education	Education			
School only	10 (27.8)	35 (34.7)		
Trade certificate / Diploma	10 (27.8)	25 (24.8)		
Bachelor / Post-graduate Degree	16 (44.4)	41 (40.6)		
Psychological Distress ^b				
Low – Moderate (6 – 18)	11 (30.6)	28 (27.7)		
High (19 – 30)	24 (66.7)	69 (68.3)		
Physical health				
Poor	12 (33.3)	28 (27.7)		
Fair	16 (44.4)	43 (42.6)		
Good	5 (13.9)	18 (17.8)		
Very Good / Excellent	3 (8.3)	12 (11.0)		
Body Mass index (kg/m²) c				
< 18.5	0 (0 – 0)	2 (2.0)		
18.5 – 24.9	9 (25.0)	26 (25.7)		
25 – 29.9	10 (27.8)	27 (26.7)		
> 30	16 (44.4)	44 (43.6)		
Diagnosis ^{c, d}				
Depression	27 (75.0)	62 (61.4)		
Anxiety	1 (2.8)	6 (5.9)		
Bipolar Affective Disorder	6 (16.7)	19 (18.8)		
Psychosis ^e	2 (5.6)	11 (11.0)		

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder	5 (13.9)	12 (11.9)
Other ^f	1 (2.8)	7 (7.0)

Notes

^a Not working: Looking for employment, full time house keeping, retired, studying, volunteering

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^b Psychological distress derived from the Kessler 6

^c Data retrieved from participant's medical records

^d Diagnosis: It is noted that some participants had more than one primary diagnosis.

^e Psychosis: Schizophrenia, Schizoaffective Disorder; Psychotic Disorder

^f Other: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder; Eating Disorder; Personality Disorder

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Table 2

427 Domain specific self-reported physical activity duration (minutes/week)

428

	Median (IQR)	
Walking for transport	60 (10.0 – 131.25)	
Walking for recreation and exercise	60 (0 – 150)	
Vigorous gardening and yard work	0 (0 – 0)	
Vigorous physical activity	0 (0 – 60)	
Moderate physical activity	0 (0 – 30)	
Total self-reported moderate-vigorous physical activity ^a	225 (101.25 – 600)	

Notes

N = 101

Items reported as median (25th 75th percentile)

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^a Total physical activity excludes vigorous gardening and yard work, and has vigorous activity weighted by two.

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436 Table 3
437 Domain specific self-reported sedentary behaviour duration (minutes/day)
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	Weekday	Weekend
	Median (IQR)	Median (IQR)
Travelling to and from places	30 (0 -60)	30 (0 -60)
Watching television	60 (0 -180)	60 (0 -180)
Using a computer	30 (0 -120)	10 (0 – 120)
Psycho-education group	60 (0 – 120)	0 (-)
Art therapy group	0 (0 – 120)	0 (-)
With a health professional ^a	67.5 (46.25 – 180)	20 (0 – 30)
Smoking	0 (-)	0 (-)
General relaxing (sitting or lying) ^b	120 (60 – 240)	120 (30 – 240)
Doing work ^c	0 (0 – 60)	0 (0 – 60)
Doing nothing (sitting or lying)	120 (60 – 240)	120 (30 – 240)
Total sedentary behaviour time	780 (555 - 1020)	600 (405 - 825)

Notes

N = 101

Items reported as median (25th 75th percentile)

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^a Doctor, Nurse, Psychologist, Social Worker or Occupational Therapist

^b Example: reading, needle work (not watching television or using a computer)

 $^{^{\}circ}$ Example: homework, assignments, reading documents, writing NOT using a computer