

Factors Influencing Motivation to Perform Mental and Physical Tasks during the Initial Lockdown Period of the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Drastic changes to lifestyles have occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic. A consequence of non-pharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) used against this health crisis, such as stay-at-home orders, has been increased isolation and less social interaction for a majority of people. For overall wellbeing, it is important to stay both physically and mentally active. However, for many individuals motivation may be a barrier. There are non-modifiable (e.g., sex, age) and modifiable factors (e.g., physical activity, diet) that may be associated with motivation to perform physical/mental tasks. **PURPOSE:** To explore if there is an association between non-modifiable and modifiable variables on motivation to perform mental/physical tasks under COVID-19 NPIs. **METHODS:** We collected data from 794 subjects using Qualtrics and each subject completed our survey once each week during April 1st to May 3rd of 2020. This is an ongoing study that will terminate when the COVID-19 pandemic ends. Survey questionnaires included demographics, personality traits, diet, physical activity levels, and motivation to perform mental/physical tasks. Multiple linear regression analyses were used for statistical analysis. **RESULTS:** Significant results include: a) those who reported a higher quality of diet (REAP-S score) ($\beta=.015$, $p<0.05$; $\beta=0.000$, $p<0.001$), exercised vigorously ($\beta=0.005$, $p<0.01$; $\beta=0.000$, $p<0.001$), and reduced their sedentary time ($\beta=.000$, $p<0.01$; $\beta=.000$, $p<0.001$), reported higher motivation to perform both mental and physical tasks, respectively; b) those who were employed ($\beta=.043$, $p<0.05$) and had higher grit ($\beta=.041$, $p<0.05$) were more motivated to perform physical tasks; and c) lower trait physical energy was associated with greater motivation to perform mental tasks ($\beta=.027$, $p<0.05$). **CONCLUSION:** Our findings indicate that living a healthy lifestyle is associated with motivation to perform both mental and physical tasks during the initial lockdown period of the COVID-19 pandemic. These preliminary results support the continuation of data collection. Future research should focus on trying to determine the directionality of the relationship between healthy lifestyle behaviors and motivation.