

Living Situation and Physical Activity in the COVID-19 Pandemic Among Private University Students

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ABSTRACT

Physical activity levels among college students in private institutions were significantly altered by the COVID-19 pandemic. With COVID-19's impact on universities, many students experienced transition, including a change in living situation. Behaviors in college help establish life-long habits that can determine health outcomes, so it's important to investigate any declines in physical activity observed during the pandemic. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this study was to assess differences in physical activity based on living situation among 18- to 25-year-old private university students during the COVID-19 pandemic. **METHODS:** Adults (n=109) between 18- and 25-years-old in the greater Houston area completed an online survey, which included the International Physical Activity Questionnaire - Short Form. Independent samples T-tests examined MET-minute differences based on living situation.

RESULTS: Students living with versus without a parent/guardian attained similar activity levels ($t(107) = -.114, p = .910$) before the pandemic, but students living with a parent/guardian engaged in significantly less activity ($t(107) = 2.04, p = .044$) during the pandemic. **CONCLUSION:** The pandemic presented a strong obstacle to physical activity participation among private university students. Students living with a parent/guardian during this time saw an even more significant decrease in physical activity. Based on these findings, targeted interventions should be made to increase the physical activity of college students during COVID-19, especially for those living at home with a parent or guardian.