

Parents' Awareness About Leisure Time Physical Activity of Children Aged Nine Years in Kesbewa Educational Division, Sri Lanka

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Leisure Time Physical Activity (LTPA) of children is very important towards their physical and mental wellbeing. Children aged 9 in Sri Lanka must face grade five scholarship examination to get an opportunity to enter a high school. Hence, there is a massive education competition among them. As a result, there is a considerable reduction in physical activity and gradual increase in obesity levels of children of this age. Parents or guardians play a major role in this scenario. This study was performed to assess the parents' knowledge, attitudes and practices about LTPA of children aged 9 years in Kesbewa educational division and to determine the association of LTPA of the children with social factors of the family. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted between September to November 2018. 382 parents of children aged 9 years participated in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was distributed among the parents as the data collection tool. Data were analyzed using SPSS Statistics version 23. Parents had a good knowledge, favorable attitudes and practices on LTPA of the children. Among 382 parents, 373 (97.6 %) have heard about LTPA. When considering the attitudes regarding LTPA, majority of parents, 269 (70.4 %) were in the opinion that the children must be exposed to both academic activities as well as leisure time physical activities. Pearson chi square tests were performed to find out the associations between level of LTPA and social factors. There was an association between the marital status of the parents and the LTPA of the children ($p < 0.0001$). This study found that most of the time, parents were physically active and aware of the importance of LTPA.

Keywords: Leisure time physical activity, Parent's awareness