

# Level of Physical Activity and Changes in Lifestyle-Related Behaviour during COVID -19 Pandemic, among Undergraduate Medical Students of Faculty of Medicine, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka: A Cross-sectional Study

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The COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdown could prevent students from achieving the recommended levels of physical activity due to home confinement, and it also could lead to changes in lifestyle related behaviour. Medical students are already known as a risk group for physical inactivity. Therefore, the aim of this study was to identify the level of physical activity and lifestyle related behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic among undergraduate medical students. A web-based survey, consisted of questions from the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) short form and a lifestyle related behaviour questionnaire, was used as a Google form. A total of 244 participants (age= 22.55±1.84, n=110; 45.1% males and n=134; 54.9 %females) completed the questionnaire. The mean weekly total metabolic equivalent (MET) minutes of the population was 1039.71±1234.96. Majority (47.1%) were inactive while only 9.4% were highly active according to the IPAQ categorical score. Vigorous, moderate, and total MET-minutes/week were significantly higher in males compared to females ( $p<0.05$ ). There was a statistically significant difference in total MET minutes per week among different BMI categories determined by one-way ANOVA. The Tukey post hoc test revealed that total MET minutes/week was significantly lower ( $p=0.035$ ) in underweight participants (697.77±844.38) compared to overweight participants (1482.09± 1662.52). The study identified that a higher percentage of participants were inactive. Thus, strategies should be implemented to promote physical activity and active lifestyles among undergraduate medical students, especially during a pandemic like COVID-19.

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