

Association between Musculoskeletal Pain Symptoms and Physical Activity Level among Undergraduates of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences- Kotelawala Defence University: A Descriptive Cross-Sectional Study

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As a result of online learning methods, undergraduate students have adapted to prolong static position which has encouraged to a sedentary life style resulting low physical activity level and it is associated with high incidence of musculoskeletal pain symptoms. The current study was aimed to investigate the association between musculoskeletal pain symptoms and level of physical activity among undergraduates of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, General Sir John Kotelawala Defence University. A descriptive cross sectional study which included 613 undergraduates was carried out using validated structured self-administrated questionnaires. It included demographic characteristics, standardized Nordic Questionnaire to assess musculoskeletal pain symptoms during last 12 months and last 7 days, International Physical Activity Questionnaire (Short Form) to assess the physical activity level. The responses to the questionnaires were collected in online method and the data were statistically analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences software, version 22. The study revealed that 54.6% of undergraduates (n=335) had musculoskeletal pain symptoms in one or more body parts and most of them were females (40.9%). The statistically significant association were obtained using the chi-square test between physical activity level and musculoskeletal pain symptoms in neck (p=0.04) and lower back (p=0.02) regions during last 12 months and neck region (p=0.04) during last 7 days recall period. There was a high prevalence of musculoskeletal pain symptoms among Allied Health Sciences undergraduates and physical activity level is associated with musculoskeletal pain symptoms. Promoting physical activities among undergraduates could be an effective approach toward reducing musculoskeletal pain symptoms.

Keywords: BMI, gender, musculoskeletal pain symptoms, physical activity level, undergraduates