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Factors and barriers associated with physical activity among youth in Saudi Arabia

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Objective: This paper aims to provide a brief overview of the published data about the prevalence of physical activity among young people aged from 14 to 25 in Saudi Arabia and discuss the factors associated with physical inactivity.

Method: A literature search was conducted in December 2016 with PubMed, Medline Saudi Journals and JSTOR search using the following search term: physical activity, physical inactivity, lifestyle, adolescent, young, and college students and only studies done on Saudi population were selected. All related published articles from any time period through December 2016 were included. All studies which do not contain the prevalence or factor associated with physical inactivity are excluded. 40 articles talking about physical activity in Saudi Arabia were found, but only 7 articles targeting this young group who aged from 15-25 were included. The rest of the 40 articles were excluded because it targeted other age groups. Once the list of the selected articles was identified, we extracted and cross checked the following for each: authors, region in which study was conducted, sample characteristics (number, size, gender, age), physical activity measurement tools, and physical activity prevalence.

Result: The samples in the studies ranged from 94 to 2908. Most studies used the Arab Teens Lifestyle Study (ATLS) questioner. The total rate of physical activity for both the genders ranged from 13.9% to 26%. While physical inactivity was high as it ranged from 57 to 64.4% for both. Time constraint seems to be the major factor contributing to inactivity, lack of facility was listed next, followed by health condition.

Conclusion: Prevalence of physical activity among adolescents in Saudi Arabia is low and the sedentary lifestyle is prevalent among this young group. Thus, prevention of lifestyle-related diseases at an early age is an important public health priority, especially considering the fact that children and adolescents account for more than 50% of the Saudi population.

Biography

Huda Alraddadi is a Physician, graduated from Medical School, Taibah University in 2014. She works as a Demonstrator at Taiba University, Family and Community Medicine Department. She is a 1st year resident in Community Medicine, Saudi Board Program. She has one published paper in *Journal of Taibah University Medical Sciences* in 2016.

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