

Physical activity patterns among persons with diabetes attending the National Diabetes Centre, Sri Lanka

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Physical Activity (PA) and exercise have proven to prevent and control diabetes. Diabetes is a costly health burden in Sri Lanka, while effective diabetes management with exercise may be a cost-effective strategy than prescribing drugs alone. However, it is important to evaluate various PA domains in order to prescribe suitable exercise patterns. But such records for diabetes patients are limited in Sri Lanka. The objective of this study was to assess the prevalence levels of domain-specific and overall PA among diabetes patients attending the National Diabetes Centre.

A descriptive cross sectional study was carried out for 105 randomly selected patients attending the National Diabetes Center, where PA was assessed using the validated long version of International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ). After assessing the domain-specific and overall PA level, patients were categorized as highly active, moderately active and insufficiently active according to the IPAQ guidelines.

The sample consisted of 55 males and, 50 females with the mean age of 43.70 ± 19.103 years. Highest overall distribution of PA was recorded from 'domestic and yard work' domain (81% of the sample involved in PA), while the domains of 'leisure' (40%) and 'job' (35.2%) had the least PA. Most diabetics (86.7%) tend to involve in moderate PA, whereas vigorous PA was the least prevalent activity type (16.2%) in the study sample. With regard to overall PA, 43.8% of diabetics were found to be highly active, while 35.2% were moderately and 21% were insufficiently active.

Although our results revealed that most of the diabetes individuals in the sample were sufficiently active, they were less involved in exercise during their leisure domain, which is vital to be reversed. The findings of this study will help clinicians to plan suitable exercise sessions for diabetes individuals especially targeting their leisure domain. Extension of this study to all diabetes centers in Sri Lanka and promoting leisure time physical activities would be of national importance.