

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Elderly population has markedly increased in Sri Lanka with older people contributing more to the families and societies but with limitations due to non-communicable diseases (NCD). Physical activity is one of the major behavioural factors that attributes to combating NCD globally and involved in healthy ageing.

Objectives: To assess the knowledge on benefits, perceived motivations, limitations and level of physical activity (PA) and factors associated with level of physical activity among 60 -69 years old apartment residents in a Medical Officer of Health (MOH) area in Colombo Municipal Council (CMC).

Methods: A descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 560 apartment residents aged 60- 69 years in D1 MOH area in CMC, recruited by multistage probability proportional to population size cluster sampling. An interviewer administered questionnaire assessed socio demographics, personal health, apartment details, knowledge on benefits and perceived limitations and motivations of PA. International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) - short version assessed levels of PA. Data was analysed with SPSS version 21.0. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics and chi squared test. Significance level was set at 0.05.

Results: Mean age of participants was 64.1 years (\pm SD 3.25). Majority were females (n=326;58.2%), Tamils (n=318;56.8%), married (n=435;77.7%), currently working (n=203;36.1%), had secondary education (n=207;37%), monthly income <15 000 rupees (n=339;60.6%), had chronic diseases (n=407;72.7%), lived in apartments which had lifts (n=430;76.7%) but no separate place for PA (n=452;80.8%), resided in fourth floor and above (n=407;72.6%), chief occupants (n=346;61.8%), lived with spouses (n=405;72.3%), had high technology usage (n=290;51.7%) and inadequate stairs usage (n=427;76.2%). Of them, 49.0% (n=274) had poor knowledge on the benefits of PA and inadequate motivations (n=355;63.4%) for PA. However, only 20.5% (n=115) had substantial limitations to do PA. Majority were involved in moderate level PA (n=285;50.9%). Inadequate PA levels were significantly ($p<0.05$) associated with secondary education and above, monthly income >15 000.00 rupees, presence of chronic disease and physical disabilities, residing in lower floors, not having grandchildren and high technology usage.

Conclusions and Recommendations: The PA levels were adequate among majority despite having poor knowledge on benefits of PA. Apartment residents should be encouraged to use stairs often, limit their usage of technology and sitting time.

Key words

Physical activity, elderly, perceptions, determinants of physical activity, knowledge on benefits of physical activity