

## ABSTRACT

**Background:** Park users were usually a group of persons who has initiated a process to be healthy, and calls to explore the motivation and their attitudes regarding healthy behavior such as being active and eating healthy.

**Objective:** To assess the dietary habits, activity pattern, motivation and attitudes among users of larger city parks in Colombo Commercial City

**Methods:** A community based descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted enrolling 411 users of six active large city parks in Colombo Commercial City by using systematic sampling technique. Pre-tested interviewer administered questionnaire was used in data collection which included validated IPAQ (International Physical Activity Questionnaire) short form and validated Food Frequency Questionnaire. SPSS version 26.0 was used. Chi square test with  $p$  value  $< 0.05$  was used to determine the level of significance.

**Results:** Majority of park users were minimally active (64.0%,  $n=263$ ) whereas only 27.0% ( $n=111$ ) were HEPA (Health Enhancing Physical Activity) level. Majority of the park users were in 'optimum' diet quality category (94.2%,  $n=384$ ), although the level of consumption of energy dense food was high. For reason for using parks the most common motivation was to carry out PA (88.1%,  $n=362$ ) followed by mental relaxation (26.5%,  $n=109$ ). Reasons for coming to the park was to be happy (47.9%,  $n=197$ ), followed to enjoy freedom (32.8%,  $n=135$ ). Majority came due to their own persuasion (89.3%,  $n=367$ ).

Being HEPA active was associated with ethnicity, ( $p < 0.001$ ), religion ( $p < 0.001$ ), living in place less than 2km away from the parks ( $p = 0.001$ ), higher education ( $p = 0.002$ ), having normal weight or being underweight BMI ( $p = 0.003$ ) and absence of NCD ( $p < 0.001$ ). Being Sinhalese ( $p < 0.001$ ), Buddhist ( $p < 0.001$ ), being other occupation except professionals and executives ( $p = 0.019$ ), monthly family income less than Rs.80,000 ( $p < 0.001$ ) were associated with optimum diet quality. Being less than 40 years ( $p = 0.008$ ), Sinhalese ( $p = 0.014$ ), living in a place less than 2 Km from the park ( $p < 0.001$ ), professionals and executives ( $p < 0.001$ ), being overweight and obese ( $p = 0.006$ ), unfavourable attitude ( $p = 0.007$ ) were associated with motivation to do PA. Being less than 2 Km away ( $p < 0.001$ ), professionals and executives ( $p = 0.045$ ),

income>Rs.80,000 (p=0.001) and presence of NCD (p=0.008) associated with favourable attitude.

**Conclusions and Recommendations:** Several sociodemographic factors and health related factor were associated with healthy behaviours, motivation and positive attitudes which needs to be further explored.

**Key words:** Physical activity, dietary, motivation, attitude