

ACSM Risk Classification and Risk Factor Prevalence Rates Among College Students

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The ACSM provides guidelines for pre-screening subjects prior to exercise participation based on chronic disease, signs and symptoms of cardiovascular disease and risk factors. **PURPOSE:** To determine risk classification and prevalence of risk factors in a cohort of college aged males and females (average age 22.1 years). **METHODS:** Students in Kinesiology Physical Activity Program (KPAP) activity classes were screened with self-reported medical history evaluated with Par-Q+ and Eparmedx screening tools prior to their course required fitness assessment. **RESULTS:** Risk classification in our male cohort (n=1,689) showed 40.9% classified as low-risk, 46.2% were medium-risk and 12.8% were high-risk. Among moderate risk males (n=780) the most commonly found risk factors were obesity, smoking, and sedentariness. Among high-risk males (n=217) 131 subjects (60.4%) of subjects had known disease. Most common risk factors in this group were smoking and sedentariness. Risk classification in our female subjects (n=1384) showed 42.4% were classified as low risk, 39.7% were moderate-risk and 17.9% were high-risk. Among moderate-risk females (n=549), the most prevalent risk factors were: smoking, obesity, and sedentariness. In the high-risk female population (n=247) 149 subjects had known disease. Obesity and sedentary lifestyle were the most common risk factors. A majority, 52%, of our subjects were considered sedentary prior to the start of their KPAP class. **CONCLUSION:** In our cohort of young men and women, a significant portion of our sample was either high-risk (15.1%) or moderate-risk (43.2%). These findings emphasize the importance of screening students prior to their exercise test. Our findings also show that the risk factors present in this sample are largely reversible; with lifestyle modification it should be possible to alter risk profiles among college aged males and females.