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Association between Physical Activity and Social Media Usage in College Students

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PURPOSE: To examine the association between self-reported physical activity (PA) participation and social media usage in a sample of college students. **METHODS:** College students completed a one-time online questionnaire regarding PA participation and social media use. PA participation was assessed using the International Physical Activity Questionnaire-Short Form. Students were eligible to participate if they were 18-29 years old and were registered for classes during the spring 2019 semester. **RESULTS:** Two hundred ninety-two participants completed the questionnaire. Participants reported engaging in an average of 184.4 ± 174.2 minutes per week of moderate intensity PA and 269.20 ± 206.3 minutes per week of vigorous intensity PA. While the mean self-report physical activity participation exceeded the minimum physical activity recommendations, only 30.8% of the sample engaged in a minimum of 150 of moderate intensity activity each week, and 61.4% in the recommended minimum of 75 minutes of vigorous intensity PA. Furthermore, 31.6% of participants did not report engagement in moderate intensity PA and 27.9% did not report engagement in vigorous intensity PA. In this sample, 97.9% of students reported using social media daily, with 41.38% and 43.1% reporting 1-2 hours and 3-4 hours of social media use each day, respectively. There was no significant association between daily hours of social media use and PA for moderate intensity activity ($r = -0.109$, $p = 0.120$) or vigorous intensity activity ($r = -0.002$, $p = 0.973$). **CONCLUSION:** Not all college students are achieving the recommended amounts of physical activity, with an estimated 69.2% of students not achieving the minimum recommended amount of moderate intensity PA and 38.4% not achieving the recommended minimum of vigorous intensity PA. Approximately half of all students (51%) reported using social media for three or more hours per day. While PA participation and social media usage were not significantly associated, findings from this study indicate that there is a need to identify effective PA promotion strategies within this population. Social media is a channel that most college students use daily and future studies should investigate the efficacy of using a popular social media platform to promote regular PA behavior in this population.