

SWACSM Abstract

Academic Stress and Motivation for Physical Activity in College Students

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ABSTRACT

PURPOSE: Stress and the college experience go hand in hand. Stress has been shown to negatively impact a college student's life and their confidence. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to assess the influence that academic stress in college students has on one's motivation to participate in physical activity (PA).

METHODS: An Institutional Review Board approved Qualtrics, cross-sectional online survey was conducted during the fall 2021 term. This study utilized the 13-item Perceived Stress Inventory (PSI), and 9-item Self-Efficacy for Exercise (SEE), based on studies by Avdija, A. S. (2018) and Resnick, et al. (2000) respectively. Questions were formatted using a 10-point Likert scale and scores were summed for both PSI (total score = 130) and SEE (total score = 90). **RESULTS:** Eighty nine participants completed the online survey, of those respondents, 82% attended a public institution of higher learning and 76.4% were female. Sufficient evidence was collected to show that academic stress was significantly associated with motivation to conduct physical activity ($\rho = 0.378$; $p < .001$). **CONCLUSION:** It was found that academic stress and motivation to participate in PA were related in college students enrolled in the fall 2021 term. Given the naturally occurring, high workload and time consuming environment that comes with the college experience, it is very important for individuals to participate in exercise or be engaged in PA on a regular basis. Further research into college students' motivation to exercise or engage in PA while enrolled in higher education may assist college/university campuses with further supporting students through the stresses of college life.