

The Relationship Between Physical Activity and Quality of Sleep in College Students

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ABSTRACT

In addition to the rigors of academic life post pandemic, students are often faced with balancing a healthy mindset, extracurricular activities, family time, and employment, all while pursuing their future professional career. Each of these endeavors takes time and effort on the part of the individual. When stressed with little time to spare, health behaviors in a college student are typically last on the list of priorities and often physical activity and sleep get the least amount of attention. While both sleep and physical activity have been shown to benefit college student success, they are more often than not, forgotten. Post pandemic, it was unknown if college students' sleep habits and physical activity levels were related. **PURPOSE:** The current study analyzed the relationship between low intensity or walking level of physical activity and quality of sleep in the fall of 2021 with the return to in-person learning. **METHODS:** Participants (≥ 18 year old college/university students) were asked to volunteer to complete an online cross sectional Qualtrics survey and were asked to answer a series of questions (typically 15 minutes to complete) about physical activity patterns and sleep habits. This study assessed low intensity or walking levels of physical activity within a 7 day period based on the International Physical Activity Questionnaire and research developed participants perceived sleep quality (Likert scale from 1 being excellent to 5 being poor) within college students. Data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 and a Spearman Rank Order Correlation Test to assess the relationship between the variables. **RESULTS:** Eighty-seven college/university students (mean age 23.9 +/- 7.1 years, female, n=68, male, n=17 and other, n=2) participated in the survey. Total minutes of low intensity or walking levels for physical activity during the 7 days was 269.0 \pm 735.3 minutes and respondents rated their sleep quality 3.0 \pm 1.1 out of a total of 5. No significant correlation between the two variables was found in the college students assessed. **CONCLUSION:** While low intensity or walking levels of physical activity didn't correlate to sleep quality, more moderate or vigorous intensity may shed light on the topic and further research on the impact physical activity has on sleep habits is needed.