

A-49: Physical fitness of Sri Lankan students

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Research studies on physical fitness of Sri Lankan subjects are limited. Cullumbine *et al* determined the fitness of a large group of subjects using the step test. Dias *et al* reported that the fitness of athletes determined by the Astrand nomogram was inferior to international standards.

In the present study, the 12 minute run-walk test devised by Cooper, where the maximum distance covered in 12 minutes is used as an index of fitness, was used to determine the fitness in a group of school children and University students. For analysis of data, the subjects of each sex were divided into 2 groups according to whether they engaged in sports regularly or were sedentary. The mean distance covered in 12 minutes was used to determine the fitness level of each group from Cooper's table.

For both sexes, the mean 12 minutes distance is significantly higher for the sports group ($p < 0.001$). Mean values for males are significantly higher than those for females ($p < 0.001$) in both groups.

The results indicate that the fitness level of males is comparable to American standards, while that of females is relatively lower when assessed by Cooper's test.