

A-17 Exercise habits and psychological well-being among medical entrants

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Physical health of an individual is known to improve by physical exercise. It has also been shown that sustained physical activity will result in positive changes in psychological adjustments, especially mood, anxiety, depression and self-esteem.

The aim of this study is to determine the effects of exercise habits of medical entrants on their psychological well-being, hypothesizing that medical entrants are aware of the significance of exercise on physical health but may not be aware of its effects on mental health.

In this study, a sample of 120 medical entrants of Faculty of Medicine, Ragama, were given a simple questionnaire printed both in Sinhala and English languages. Of the administered questionnaires, 117 were analysed and the rest rejected due to incompleteness in answering.

The results show that the majority of students 105 (89.7%) took part in physical exercise while only 12 (10.3%) entrants did not involve in physical exercise. Of the students who took part in physical exercise, 78 (66.7%) took part occasionally. The main reason given by them 42 (47.7%) was inadequate time due to studies. However, 87 (75%) believe that exercise is beneficial in maintaining good health and 85 (73.9%) think that it improves their self-esteem.

According to the results of our study, the medical entrants are aware of the significance of regular exercise on physical as well as psychological well-being, though they do not take part in regular physical exercise because of (i) lack of time due to studies (47.7%), (ii) not interested in exercise (12.5%), (iii) spend time on other activities (23.9%) and (iv) ill health (5.7%).