

Correlates of Habitual Walking and Sports/Leisure-time Physical Activity in Older Persons in Singapore: Interaction Effects Between Educational Attainment and Gender

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Abstract

Introduction: We examined for demographic and psychosocial correlates on the participation of habitual walking and sports/leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) among older persons in Singapore. **Materials and Methods:** In an observational study, 177 Chinese, community/urban-dwelling, ambulant, non-disabled participants ≥ 50 years old were recruited from a health promotion programme. The main outcome measures were self-reported participation in habitual walking and sports/LTPA. Variables examined include highest educational attainment, demographic and health characteristics, social contact and health knowledge. Interaction between gender and educational attainment was also examined. **Results:** The mean age of participants was 62.5 ± 7.8 years. The effects of educational level were significant on habitual walking ($P = 0.02$), while that of age, self-rated health and interaction between gender and educational level were significant for sports/LTPA ($P = 0.012$, $P = 0.002$ and $P = 0.019$, respectively). Men with higher education had a higher self-reported sport/LTPA, while in women; those with lower education attainment had a higher participation. **Conclusion:** Unlike findings from Western developed nations, previous studies done in Japan and Singapore found that educational level and health behaviours may not be positively associated. In this study, there is a negative correlation between educational attainment and participation in habitual walking and sports/LTPA, especially among older Singaporean women.

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