

Increased Risks of Mental Disorders: Youth with Inactive Physical Activity

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Abstract

Before COVID-19, one of the most dangerous pandemics of the 21st century was physical inactivity (PI). Sedentary habits had increased in the last decades, reducing physical condition and increasing non-communicable diseases and mental disorders in the population. This study aimed to analyse the relationships between physical activity level (PAL) and the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders in Spanish young aged 15–35 years and to calculate the odd ratio (OR) of developing from these mental disorders in inactive young people, based on PAL. Methods: A cross-sectional study based on data from the Spanish National Health Survey 2017 with 4195 participants was conducted. A descriptive analysis was performed. Possible differences between groups were analysed using the non-parametric statistical tests. OR and relative risks for mental disorders in inactive versus others PAL were calculated. Results: Dependence relationships were found between PAL and the prevalence of anxiety, depression, and other mental disorders ($p < 0.001$). In addition, the risk of developing: anxiety (OR: 6.14. 95% CI: 3.28–11.50), depression (OR: 5.35. 95% CI: 2.40–11.96), and other mental disorders (OR: 8.52. 95% CI: 2.90–25.06) was higher in inactive young people. Conclusions: PI is associated to high risk of mental disorders in Spanish young people. © 2022 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

Author keywords

Anxiety; Depression; Mental health; Physical activity; Sedentary lifestyle