

Influence of an Atypical Academic Year on the Physical Activity Levels of 1st Year Students of Physiotherapy

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Intro

Portugal is one of the European Union countries with the lowest rate of Physical Activity (PA), with only 40% of the population being active. During the university period, there is a coincidence of increased autonomy and decision-making, and changes in life habits, usually associated with a decrease in PA practice.

Objective

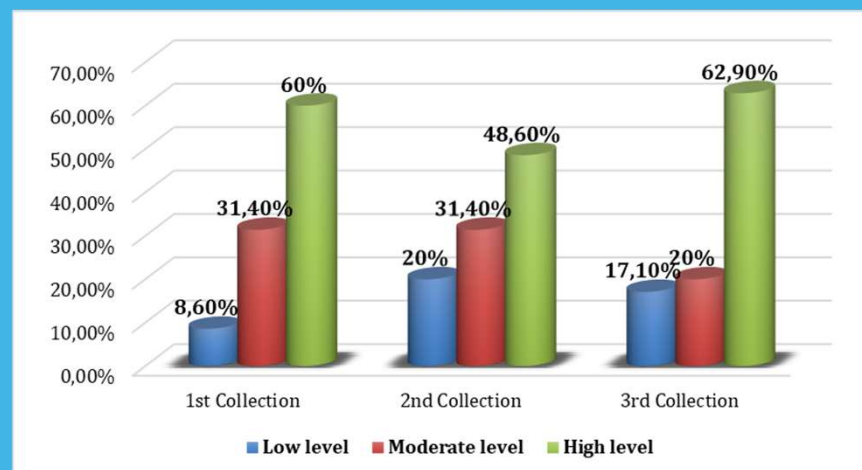
Understand if there are differences in the practice of PA, at different times of the school year, one of which is the quarantine period.

Methods

Longitudinal study. Data was collected using the "International Physical Activity Questionnaire" (IPAQ). It was shared in online format in 3 moments:

- academic period without evaluations
- exam period
- online classes / social isolation

The quarantine period does not appear to have had a negative impact on PA levels, unlike the exams period



Results

Physiotherapy students seem to be active regarding the parameter of PA frequency. With online classes, there was an increase in the level of PA in 20% of students compared to the school period without assessments, with 14.3% being raised to a high level of PA. The high percentage of students (42.9%) who maintained a high PA level should be highlighted. There was a significant difference from the 1st to the 2nd moment, at the IPAQ level, with a decrease in PA ($p = 0.03$) with the exam period.

Discussion

In the exam period, although the workload on the schedule is shorter, there seems to have been a decrease in PA levels. In a situation of confinement, aspects are presumed to have been removed, which in a normal situation would compromise the practice of PA, leading to better results in some of the variables under study.

Conclusions

This study established a starting point for the assessment of PA levels, in the period of COVID-19. As the sample is composed of future health professionals, it's important that they be the first to adopt an active lifestyle, thus promoting it.