

## **AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS\***

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### **RESUMEN ANALÍTICO ESPECIALIZADO (RAE)**

**DESCRIPTION:** Many authors have expressed the need for ascertaining a particular population's physical activity (PA) patterns as the basis for designing policy and strategies for promoting an active and healthy life-style, as well as determining the factors and barriers leading people making a start on it, maintaining it or abandoning it.

**SOURCE:** Several epidemiological and experimental studies have shown the effect of physical activity (PA) and sedentary behaviour on the adolescent and adult populations' health<sup>1,2</sup>. For example, it has been shown that fulfilling known recommendations regarding PA (150 minutes of PA weekly) is associated with a reduced risk of premature death and reduced risk concerning the following diseases: coronary disease, cerebral-vascular disease, hypertension, dyslipidaemia, diabetes mellitus type 2, metabolic syndrome, breast cancer, cancer of the colon and depresión<sup>3-9</sup>.

Rodríguez-Romo *et al.*,<sup>10</sup> have shown that the barriers most frequently mentioned by young people concern negative experiences related to PA when they were at school, a lack of reference roles and little support from a their partners. Booth *et al.*,<sup>11</sup> and Satariano *et al.*,<sup>12</sup> have stated that the commonest barriers in the adult population are usually to do with not having enough time, a lack of sports' installations, a lack of interest and, to a lesser extent, not having companions or money, poor health, pain, having to look after children or having had negative experiences in the past.

Such broad gamut of reasons, motives and disincentives presented by people for beginning, maintaining or abandoning active life-styles has led to suggesting the need for individual strategies or strategies targeting specific groups as the most effective way of influencing reduced inactivity in determined sectors of the population<sup>13</sup>. The US Department of Health and Human Services provided a PA-related tool called the Barriers to Being Active Quiz (BBAQ). This questionnaire was aimed at ascertaining perception of barriers against engaging in PA by using the following domains: lack of time, social influence, lack of energy, lack of willpower, fear of injury, lack of skill and lack of resources<sup>14</sup>. This questionnaire has been used

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by different US entities, such as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the US Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS). It has also been used routinely in population studies in Latin America<sup>15,16</sup>.

**AIM & CONTENT:** To investigate the prevalence of barriers and their association with Colombia college students engaging in PA.

**METHODS:** A total of 5,663 students (3,348 male) from three cities in Colombia. In fall 2013, students voluntarily completed a demographic questionnaire, Barriers to Being Active Quiz. Logistic regression analysis of each barrier (adjusted for confusion variables: gender, age and BMI) was used for verifying such association.

**RESULTS:** The most prevalent barriers in overweight individuals were “fear of injury” (87.0%), “lack of skill” (79.8%) and “lack of resources” (64.3%). The group of females revealed a protective association regarding “lack of time” (OR=0.53: 0.47-0.60 95%CI), “social influence” (OR=0.67: 0.60-0.75 95%CI), “lack of energy” (OR=0.54: 0.49-0.61 95%CI), “lack of willpower” (OR=0.57: 0.51-0.64 95%CI), “lack of skill” (OR=0.76: 0.66-0.87 95%CI) and “lack of resources” (OR=0.79: 0.71-0.89 95%CI). Such observation also appeared in the 20- to 23-year-old age group concerning “social influence” (OR=0.83: 0.74-0.94 95%CI) and in those aged over 23-years-old (OR=0.86: 0.74-0.99 95%CI) regarding “lack of energy”.

**CONCLUSION:** The present study provides relevant data on barriers to PA in Colombian university students. By revealing appreciable differences between sex, BMI and age groups, this study has specific implications for efforts perceived barriers and then recommends changes to enhance pa among young people. Promotion and intervention strategies should consider the barriers and tailor measures to the specific needs in order to reduce university student’s constraints to PA.

**KEYWORDS:** barriers, college students, exercise, motivation, physical activity.

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