PREVALENCE AND FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PHYSICAL INACTIVITY AMONG MALAYSIAN ADULTS

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Abstract. Using data from the Third National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS III) in 2006, this study examined the association between socio-demographic factors and physical inactivity in a sample of 33,949 adults aged 18 years and above by gender. Physical activity levels were measured using the Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ vers 1). Physical inactivity was defined as having a total physical activity level of less than 600 metabolic equivalents-minutes per week (METs-minutes/week) contributed by all three different life domains. Logistic regression analyses were conducted. The prevalence of overall physical inactivity was 43.7% (95% CI: 42.9-44.5). The mean total physical activity level was 894.2 METs-minutes/week. The means METs-minutes/week for the domain of work, travelling, and leisure time were 518.4, 288.1, and 134.8, respectively. Multivariable logistic regression analyses indicated that females were more likely to be physically inactive than males were (aOR=1.62; 95% CI: 1.53-1.72). Among women, being a housewife (aOR=1.78; 95% CI: 1.56-2.03), widow/divorcee (aOR=1.23; 95% CI: 1.05-1.43), and those with no formal education (aOR=1.20; 95% CI: 1.01-1.43) were found to be significantly associated with physical inactivity. Urban residents, older adults aged 65 years and above, private employees, nonworking group, and those with a monthly household income level of MYR5,000 and above appeared to be consistently associated with physical inactivity across men, women, and combined group (both). Specific health intervention strategies to promote physical activity should be targeted on population subgroups who are inactive.

Keywords: National Health and Morbidity Survey, physical inactivity, prevalence, socio-demographic factors, Malaysia