

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG GRADE 4-6 STUDENTS IN NORTHERN THAILAND

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Abstract. Physical inactivity among children can lead to serious health problems, such as overweight and obesity. In this study we aimed to determine factors associated with physical activity among grade 4-6 students from 9 randomly selected primary schools in Pho Prathap Chang District, Pichit Province, northern Thailand in order to guild public health programs to increase physical activity in this population. Study subjects in this cross-sectional study were randomly selected by stratified random sampling and asked to complete a questionnaire about demographics, knowledge and attitudes about physical activity, and activity levels. A total of 312 subjects were included in the study. The mean (\pm standard deviation; range) age of the study subjects were 10.48 years (\pm 0.93; 8-12) years; 51.3% males; 14.8% of the subjects were overweight and 9.0% were obese. Seventeen percent of subjects were physically active, defined as adequate, and 83% were physically inactive, defined as inadequate. The percentage with low, medium, and high knowledge about the benefit of physical activity were 1.0%, 43.6% and 55.4%, respectively. The subjects with good and poor attitudes about physical activity were 86.2% and 13.8%, respectively. The factors significantly associated with physical activity levels were a student age of 10 years and higher (OR=6.92; 95% CI: 3.31-14.46), relationship of adult respondent to subject as relatives (OR=2.76; 95% CI: 1.40-5.45), the education level of parents / relatives with high school and higher (OR=2.19, 95% CI: 1.01-4.75) and a role model who is physically active in the family (OR=17.57; 95% CI: 6.01-28.81).

Keywords: obesity, physical activity, school children, grade 4-6 students

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