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# Sports and Recreational Activities of the Academic Staff in the Tetovo Region

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**Authors' Contribution:** A: Study design, B: Data collection, C: Data analysis, D: Manuscript preparation, E: Discussion and conclusion

## ABSTRACT

**Study aim(s):** The study aims to determine the physical activity and type of exercises and sports used by the staff in the Tetovo region and the gender differences in physical activity.
**Methods:** The research was conducted among a group of 179 respondents divided into two subgroups (75 female respondents and 104 male respondents) at the ages of 25 to 65. The International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) was used in the process of assessing physical activity levels. Statistical analysis was conducted by using the SPSS 26 packet program and the descriptive statistics were applied to carry out the findings of the study. The physical activity level of the academic staff is expressed in frequencies and percentages and it was established that the ratio validity limit-state is 95%.
**Results:** The findings have shown that 24% of the male staff and 26.70% of the female staff reached the recommended level of physical activity. The set physical activity criterion is not met by 76% of the male staff and 73.30% of the female staff and they were classified as "insufficiently active".
**Conclusion:** It has been concluded that the academic staff in the Tetovo region is not physically active enough based on the recommended level of moderate-intensity physical activity, which is 30 minutes per day (five days a week). Based on the results of this research, it can be concluded that it is necessary to urgently take measures to increase the level of physical activity among the teaching staff in this region.

**Keywords:** Physical Activity, Academic Staff, Gender

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## INTRODUCTION

From a historical point of view, physical abilities were essential for the survival and subsistence of the individual, the family, and society. Nowadays we have a strong tendency to go in the opposite direction. Most men and women in industrialized countries live sedentary lives or are active only periodically. In their everyday work, people spend increasingly more time sitting on a chair or working with a computer. During their free time, young people and adults would rather watch television or use the computer [1]. Many factors affect participation in physical activity. These included demographic variables, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs about physical activity [2].

Physical inactivity increases the risk of numerous diseases, such as coronary heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, diabetes, colon cancer, and maybe even breast cancer, osteoporosis, and other related fractures [3]. Physical inactivity is one of the leading reasons for diseases and lower quality of life [4]. These risks continue to grow as the inactivity increases.

Through recreational activities, people not only experience pleasure or entertainment, they also have many health benefits. Individuals like to do recreational activities because through them they find refreshment by engaging in them. People through entertainment break the monotony and avoid the boring daily routine because they provide joy and relaxation to the human mind and body [5].

Through regular recreational activities academic staff include fun, decreased absenteeism, lower turnover, health care benefits, increased work efficiency, improved communication between workers and employees, recruitment of quality personnel, and improved employee relations [6].

In a great number of scientific research, it has been found that physical activity is irreplaceable when it comes to improving citizens' health and lengthening their life span. Physical activity has become increasingly important for a great deal of developed and developing world nations [7].

Hence, if contemporary human wants to preserve their health, improve their working abilities, and lengthen their working years, if they want a life full of emotions and a mental balance, they should pay special attention to fulfilling the need for physical activity. Physical activity is the most valuable and irreplaceable means of preventing the bad consequences of the high degree of civilization, urban living, and sedentary work.

According to several world health and fitness organizations, it can be concluded that every person older than two should accumulate at least 30 minutes of physical activity. They should do medium-intensity exercises for their major muscle groups, preferably every day or at least most of the days of the week [8].

Based on lifestyle, infrastructural conditions, and especially the recreational - sports in this region the majority of the staff do not meet the criterion for the recommended level of doing 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity at least five days a week [9].

The research problem is the inactivity of the academic staff in the Tetovo region. Long hours in the offices cause health issues such as being overweight, lack of motor abilities, body compositional features lack of vitality, etc. So, to develop a model which may be helpful regarding the increases of the physical activities level there is needed to conduct a study which examines the level of activity in the academic staff.

In light of the previous information, the study aims to determine the physical activity and type of exercises and sports used by the staff in the Tetovo region and the gender difference in physical activity.

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## METHODS

### *Study sample*

The research was conducted among a group of 179 volunteer participants. These respondents were elementary school and high school staff in the Tetovo region. The age of the group is defined chronologically, from 25 to 65. The group was divided into two subgroups regarding gender (104 male respondents and 75 female respondents).

### *Data collections tools*

The International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) was used in the process of assessing physical activity.

The following variables were defined based on the days and the time spent on certain activities:

- Vigorous-intensity physical activity (Vigorous MET)
- Moderate-intensity physical activity (Moderate MET)
- Travelling/transport-related physical activity (Walking MET)
- Based on the abovementioned variables, the total physical activity will be established and presented by the following variable:
- Total physical activity level (Total MET-FA).

### *Data analysis*

The basic descriptive statistical parameters were established for all of the variables: average value (X), standard deviation (SD), median (ME), quartile range (QR), kurtosis (KURT), and skewness (SKEW). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test will be used to test the normal applied variables distribution.

The physical activity level of the staff is expressed in frequencies and percentages and it was established that the validity limit-state of the ratio of the respondents who do not meet the criterion defined by Blair and his coworkers is 95%.

## RESULTS

**Table 1. Statistical parameters of physical activity (FA) among male academic staff (MET-minutes/week)**

| Level | Mean | Median | Min | Max | Quartiles | SD | Skew | Kurt | K-S(p) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vigorous MET | 720,3 | 560 | 0 | 3360,0 | 960,0 | 772,1 | 1,22 | 1,49 | p < 0,01 |
| Moderate MET | 608,7 | 480 | 0 | 2520,0 | 600,0 | 675,0 | 1,48 | 1,40 | p < 0,01 |
| Walking MET | 1003,4 | 693 | 0 | 3465,0 | 1047,7 | 889,3 | 1,16 | 0,52 | p < 0,01 |
| Total MET (FA) | 2333,0 | 2034 | 0 | 6894,5 | 2378,0 | 1585,9 | 0,67 | -0,31 | p < 0,15 |

Table 1. From the analysis of the distribution of the male staff physical activity, it can be seen that the maximum result of physical activity has been accomplished in the form of walking (693 MET-minutes/weekly). They have spent minimum time doing medium-intensity physical activity (480 MET-minutes/weekly).

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**Table 2. Statistical parameters of physical activity (FA) among female academic staff (MET-minutes/week)**

| Leve | Mean | Median | Min | Max | Quartiles | SD | Skew | Kurt | K-S(p) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Vigorous MET | 556,8 | 0 | 0 | 3360,0 | 1200,0 | 754,6 | 1,23 | 1,17 | p < 0,01 |
| Moderate MET | 851,2 | 720 | 0 | 2040,0 | 820,0 | 596,3 | 0,44 | -0,95 | p < 0,05 |
| Walking MET | 830,2 | 660 | 0 | 2194,5 | 1039,5 | 575,5 | 0,68 | -0,60 | p < 0,10 |
| Total MET (FA) | 2238,0 | 2166 | 0 | 4934,5 | 1837,0 | 1156,7 | 0,45 | -0,55 | p >0,20 |

The analysis of the distribution of the female staff physical activity has shown that the maximum result of physical activity was reached mostly by doing medium-intensity physical activity (720 MET-minutes/weekly). They have spent minimum time doing physical activity of vigorous intensity.

**Table 3. Staff percentage in the Tetovo region (95% CI) concerning the set criterion for recommended physical activity**

| Status | Male | Female |
|---|---|---|
| Do NOT meet the criterion | 76.00% | 73.30% |
| | 63.85%-80.67% | 63.37%-82.02% |
| Meet the criterion | 24.00% | 26.70% |
| | 16.03%-32.05% | 17.98%-37.63% |

Based on the results of Table 3, the set physical activity criterion is not met by 76% of the male staff, and 73.30% of the female staff, were classified as “insufficiently active”.

## DISCUSSION

The research problem was to determine the physical activity state of the academic staff in the Tetovo region. Analyzing the obtained data and comparing it with similar international research, it can be seen that 76.00% of the male teaching staff and 73.30% of the female teaching staff do not meet the criteria for physical activity.

The research findings contradict the views of some other researchers, [10-13] who thought that engaging in recreational activities promotes and enhances the task performance of the academic staff.

The physical activity level of the staff was determined and it was established that the reliability limit-state of the ratio of the respondents in the group that fulfills the set criterion is 95%, as defined by Blair and his coworkers [14], in line with the purpose of the research (to determine the level of physical activity among the staff in the Tetovo region).

Regarding the set criterion, the respondents were classified in two categories: “meet the set criterion”, and “do not meet the set criterion”. The lower limit according to which the respondents were classified in the “meet the set criterion” category is doing 30 minutes of medium-intensity physical activity at least five days a week, in free time. Based on research [15] the necessity of motor activities and the knowledge about them stimulate people's activities since 70% of the respondents declared that they practice different forms of free time tasks.

According to the results of research [16], individual barriers are the main reason for physical inactivity, of which lack of time is the first, which is

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also confirmed in our research. As many as 69% of physically inactive people cite lack of time as the main obstacle-barrier. On the other hand, it is necessary to determine the reasons why people decide to engage in physical activity, which is also the subject of this research.

According to Weinberg and Gouldu, the most common reasons for engaging in physical activities are the desire to lose weight, promotion, and maintenance of health, relaxation, enjoyment, and the opportunity to spend time with friends or family [17]. According to the research of Vaz and Bharathi done in India, 12% of teachers were sedentary and 10% showed high motor activity [18].

## CONCLUSION

The recommended physical activity level, which according to Blair and his coworkers is 30 minutes of moderate-intensity physical activity, five days a week, is met by 24% of the male staff and 26.70% of the female staff. The physical activity level of the staff in the Tetovo region is somewhat lower than that of the employees in countries members of the European Union. Based on the findings of this research, it can be concluded that it is necessary to take urgent measures to raise the physical activity level among the staff in the Tetovo region.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors reported no potential conflict of interest.

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