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Impact of physical activity on mental well-being of nursing students at International Institute of Health Sciences

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Background: Nursing is considered a stressful occupation where they have an increasingly important role and greater responsibility as they closely associate with patients. There can be various stressors that affect the psychological well-being of student nurses which can be harmful, leading to negative conditions.

Objective: The aim of this research was to find the impact of physical activities on the psychological well-being of student nurses.

Method: A quantitative, descriptive, cross-sectional study was carried out over a period of three months. Data was collected using a questionnaire sent via a Google form to 50 nursing students, studying at International Institute of Health Sciences using a convenience-sampling technique. International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ) - Short Form and 18-item Psychological Well-Being (PWB) Scale were used to gather data. Highest achievable score of both the scales were divided into three equal parts, namely, good, average and poor, good being the highest score category and poor being the lowest. Individual scores were categorized under either of the categories and analyzed descriptively.

Results: The participants consisted of 24% (n=12) males. The majority of the students (70%, n=35) were between ages 20-23 years. With regards to level of physical activity, a minority of participants (24%, n=12) were engaged in vigorous physical activities, such as heavy lifting or aerobics, three days per week whereas 30% (n=15) were doing moderate physical activities, such as carrying light loads or bicycling at a regular pace, one day per week. The majority of the students (n=28, 56%) had good psychological well-being, whereas in 6% (n=3) scored poorly.

Conclusion: The study findings illustrate that nearly half of the student nurses in the current study were not doing any vigorous or moderate physical activity. This could be the reason for psychological well-being to be average or poor among almost half of the sample. It is recommended to conduct further studies with a diverse and larger sample to identify barriers in engaging with physical activities among nurses.