

AN INVESTIGATION OF LEISURE-TIME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG PUBLIC SECTOR
EMPLOYEES IN THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH IN DOWNTOWN

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Background – Physical inactivity is recognized as a risk factor for many chronic non-communicable diseases. According to the World Health Organization, World Health Report (2002), at least 60% of the world's population does not meet the daily recommendation of physical activity. In Trinidad and Tobago, not much attention is paid to leisure-time physical activity (LTPA), there is no research literature on the leisure-time physical activity levels of the country.

Objective – The purpose of this study was to investigate leisure time physical activity (LTPA) among public sector employees in the Ministry of Health in downtown Port of Spain between the ages of 25 to 55 years.

Design – The research data was collected through the distribution of a self-administered questionnaire that was comprised of 15 questions separated into sections; demographics, activity at work, travel to and from places, leisure time activity and sedentary behavior. The data were analyzed using SPSS 21.0. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance (ANOVA)

Results – Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to test for differences between means for gender, age group, job description, and general income range. The means for age group, job description and general income range were not significantly different. However, a significant difference in means was noted in relation to gender ($p = 0.019$), males had a higher leisure time physical activity score than females.

Conclusion – Based on the results of the study, it can be said that less than half (44.4%) the sample population participated in LTPA “sometimes” during a typical 7-day week, however, a great deal of time is still being spent by members of the population being sedentary and that needs to be addressed. The male employees in the population had higher LTPA scores, and therefore participated in more LTPA than their female colleagues in the Ministry of Health. Focus should therefore be placed on increasing participation in LTPA particularly among the female population.