PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG THE ELDERLY COMMUNITY DWELLERS IN A SUBURBAN DISTRICT IN SELANGOR

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Introduction

• Physical activity (PA) is one of the important factors in the active ageing process (WHO, 2002)

• Exercise has been proven to have beneficial effects on both healthy and unwell older persons. (Young S.L 2003)

• Regular PA reduced the risk of coronary artery disease, diabetes, hypertension (Hajiwara A et al 2008)
Objective

• The aim of this study was to evaluate the physically able older person on the types, barriers and their perception in carrying out their physical activities
Methodology

- A survey was conducted among 230 older adults aged 60 years and above
- Six out of eleven villages were included in a suburban district in Selangor
- Questionnaires consisted of socio-demographic and medical background, types of physical activities (leisure, sports, house work), social support, environment and perception towards PA
RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
There was no significant relationship between physical activities and socio-demographic factors.

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Types of Activity

• In leisure activities

  Majority of the respondents walked mainly within their houses (89.1%), gardening (58.9%), cycling (15.6%), jogging (13.5%), climbing (16.1%) and weight lifting (9.9%).

• 1 older adult played tennis

• 75% respondents do household activities
The main exercise among Malaysian adults was walking (Poh BK, et al. Mal J Nutr 2010).

Environmental Barriers to physical activities

Environmental factors that hindered elderly from being physically active included weather; neighborhood safety; fear of crime; program costs; and inadequate availability, frequency, and reliability of affordable transportation (Eyler AA, 1998, Belza B, 2004). Environmental factors, like safe footpaths for walking and access to local facilities were associated with being active (Booth et al., 2001)
Lack of motivation and social support were common barriers to PA (Eyler AA, 1998, Belzar B, 2004). Family encouragement significantly correlate to PA than friends (Wong ML, 1998). Some of the elderly who live alone have had fewer opportunities to be encouraged by others (Y. S. Lee, 2003).
Belief about benefits of exercise was positively correlated to PA (Wong ML, 1998).

The attitude towards health benefits of PA was associated with physical activity participation. (Booth et al, 2001)

Conversely, those who were physically active will have good perception about physical activity (Booth et al, 2001).
Conclusion

- Walking was the most preferred choice of leisure PA
- Unsafe environment and poor transportation were perceived as barriers to PA
- However older adults were perceptive towards PA despite poor encouragement from their families, friends and health care provider
- Hence there is a need for involvement not only from the community and health care agencies but more importantly the support from family members and peers.
References


