FMPH 194 Research Project- MENTAL HEALTH AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

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BACKGROUND

- 8.5% of U.S. adults reported being depressed prior to the COVID-19 Pandemic.[1]
- 27.8% of people now report being depressed since the pandemic began.[2]
- Physical activity is known to help relieve depression symptoms and have positive health outcomes overall.[2]

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of our study was to determine whether or not physical activity had a positive effect on depression symptoms in young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODS

- Sent out a survey to our participants-google forms
- Exposure variable: amount of weekly leisure time physical activity episodes
- outcome variable: total depression symptom score
- SPSS to create a Pearson correlation graph.

RESULTS

Fig.1: Pearson correlation graph

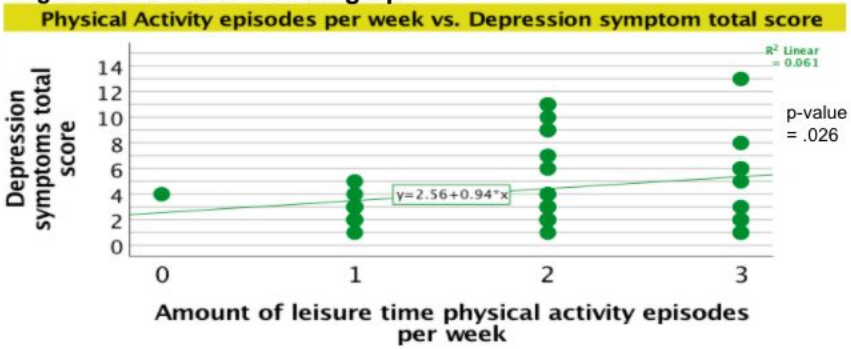

Figure 2: Sample size demographics

	N=44
Age (Years): n(%)	
18-20	15 (34.10%)
21-24	22 (50%)
25-28	7 (15.9%)
Gender: n(%)	
Female	28 (63.6%)
Male	16(36.4%)
Highest Education: n(%)	
High school graduate	18 (40.9%)
Bachelor's degree	17 (38.6%)
Some college	6 (13.6%)
A degree higher than a bachelor's	3 (6.8%)
Race/Ethnicity: n(%)	
White	13 (29.5%)
Asian	14 (31.8%)
Hispanic or Latino	14 (31.8%)
Other	3 (6.9%)

CONCLUSION

Our result was the opposite of our hypothesis. As number of exercise episodes per week increased, depression symptom total score increased; so we reject our hypothesis.

POLICY IMPLICATION & FUTURE DIRECTIONS

After conducting the experiment, we accounted for potential flaws of this conclusion: Failed to account for confounding circumstantial factors, unique to the Covid-19 pandemic & the sample size was too small. Due to these limitations, we would recommend further analysis on this topic.

For future direction, we encourage public health research to perhaps look into other potential exposures besides exercise that may have an impact on depression symptoms in young adults. If this topic was to be studied again, we would recommend reaching out to a larger and more diverse sample size. Additionally, there should be more emphasis on the context and circumstances of the individuals who fill out this survey, so that we can account for confounding factors.

References

1. Craft LL, Perna FM. The Benefits of Exercise for the Clinically Depressed. Primary care companion to the Journal of clinical psychiatry. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4747333/. Published 2004. Accessed January 29, 2021.

2. Exercise is an All-Natural Treatment to Fight Depression. Harvard Health. https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/exercise-is-an-all-natural-treatment-to-fight-depression. Published July 12, 2013. Accessed January 29, 2021.