

# Cardiovascular risk factor surveillance and physical activity among the Dubai population, UAE

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## Abstract

**Background:** Regular practicing of physical activity is considered to be one of the easiest and cost effective ways of improving and maintaining health, and avoiding diseases like diabetes mellitus, cardiovascular diseases, obesity and others. **Purpose:** The study aims to determine the prevalence of physical activity among the Dubai population and the effect of associated factors, as well as assess the knowledge, practice and attitudes of the Dubai population.

**Study/Intervention Design:** Cross sectional survey

**Methods:** A cross sectional survey was carried out upon a representative random sample of the adult Dubai population (age range 18-65 years). The sample was identified from schools, universities, primary health care centers, governmental offices, commercial malls and households. The sample size of 2226 individuals was estimated using EpiInfo software, comprising different ages, sex, incomes and social classes. The questionnaire covered a variety of domains including socio-demographic data, together with knowledge, attitudes, practice and importance of physical activity, and reasons for avoidance. **Results:** The study revealed that approximately 23.6% of the total sample had good knowledge about the importance of physical activity and 86.6% showed a positive attitude towards practicing physical activities. The study also showed the prevalence rate of regular physical activity in the Dubai adult population was approximately 34.6%. Physical activity is significantly higher among United Arab Emirates (UAEs) in comparison with expatriates, highly educated individuals (university and above) and people on a high income (10000 ED and above). The main reason for not practicing physical activity

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was lack of time (47.3%), tiredness/exhaustion (20.1%) and unavailability of suitable places (17.3%). Multiple logistic regression analysis showed four factors significantly affecting physical activity levels: (1) nationality (odds ratio (OR) 1.49 among UAEs compared to expatriates); (2) educational level (OR 2.00 among higher education compared with low education - primary school); (3) awareness and knowledge factor (OR 3.49); and (4) income factor showed higher practicing of physical activity among individuals with a high income (10000 ED and above) compared to low income individuals (less than 10000 ED). **Conclusion:** The study concluded that almost two thirds of the Dubai population are physically inactive, and physical inactivity is strongly correlated with many associated factors that play a significant role in developing that outcome.