

THE ATTITUDES OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS FACE OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY. A STUDY IN THE CENTRAL REGION OF PORTUGAL

ATITUDES DOS ESTUDANTES DO ENSINO SECUNDÁRIO FACE À PRÁTICA
DE ATIVIDADE FÍSICA. UN ESTUDO NA REGIÃO CENTRO DO PORTUGAL
ACTITUDES DE LOS ESTUDIANTES DE LA ENSEÑANZA SECUNDARIA ANTE
LA ACTIVIDAD FÍSICA. UN ESTUDIO EN LA REGIÓN CENTRO DE PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT: Several epidemiological studies have shown the importance of physical activity proving its contribution to a healthy lifestyle and individual wellness. In this sense, it is important that young people acquire knowledge, taste and motivation for physical activity and make their practice a lifestyle. The adoption of protective health behaviors in children and adolescents, promoting a life with more quality, can also determine a healthier lifestyle in adulthood and old age. In this context, attitudes are of great importance, because they can predict the motivation for learning and involvement of young people in physical and sports activities. The objective of this study is to evaluate the attitudes of high school students toward physical activity and identify the factors that interfere with them. We developed a study non - experimental, descriptive, analytical, cross and quantitative. We selected a non-probability sample accessibility, consisting of high school students, a school at the center of Portugal, consisting of 95 students aged 15 to 23 years, mean age of 17.48 years. In data collection, we used a questionnaire sociodemographic and a translated scale and validated in the Portuguese population to access attitudes towards physical activity and sport, Actitudes Scale hacia la Actividad Physics y el Deporte, developed by Dosil (2002). Students who have more positive attitudes towards physical activity, are the younger students, male gender, attending the scientific and humanistic course, alcohol consumers, practicing physical activity and your pair group practice physical activity.

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<p>PALAVRAS-CHAVE: jovem estudante atitudes atividade física</p>	<p>RESUMO: Vários estudos epidemiológicos têm evidenciado a importância da atividade física comprovando a sua contribuição para uma vida saudável e o bem-estar do indivíduo. Neste sentido, é importante que os jovens adquiram conhecimentos, gosto e motivação pela atividade física e façam da sua prática um estilo de vida. A adoção de comportamentos protetores da saúde na infância e adolescência, promovem uma vida com mais qualidade, podendo também determinar uma vida mais saudável na idade adulta e na velhice. Neste âmbito, as atitudes revestem-se de grande importância, porque podem prever a motivação para a aprendizagem e o envolvimento dos mais jovens nas atividades físicas e desportivas. Os objetivos deste estudo são avaliar as atitudes dos estudantes do ensino secundário face à atividade física e identificar quais os fatores que interferem nas mesmas. Desenvolveu-se um estudo não - experimental, descritivo, analítico, transversal e de natureza quantitativa. Foi selecionada uma amostra não probabilística por acessibilidade, constituída pelos estudantes do ensino secundário, de uma escola da região centro de Portugal, constituída por 95 estudantes com idades entre os 15 e os 23 anos, a média de idade encontrada foi de 17 à 48 anos. Na recolha de dados, foi utilizado um questionário de caracterização sociodemográfica, hábitos alimentares, hábitos tabágicos e alcoólicos, prática de atividade física pelo inquirido e pelos colegas e familiares e uma escala traduzida e validada na população portuguesa para avaliar as atitudes face à atividade física e ao desporto, Escala de Actitudes hacia la Actividad Física y el Deporte, desenvolvida por Dosil (2002). Os estudantes que apresentam atitudes mais positivas face à prática da atividade física, são os estudantes mais novos, do género masculino, a frequentar o curso científico-humanístico, consumidores de bebidas alcoólicas, que praticam atividade física e em que o seu grupo de pares pratica atividade física.</p>
<p>PALABRAS CLAVES: Joven estudiante actitudes actividad física</p>	<p>RESUMEN: Muchos estudios epidemiológicos han demostrado la importancia de la actividad física lo probando su contribución a un estilo de vida saludable y el bienestar individual. En este sentido, es importante que los jóvenes adquieran los conocimientos, el gusto y la motivación por la actividad física y hacer de su práctica un estilo de vida. La adopción de comportamientos protectores de la salud en los niños y adolescentes, promoviendo una vida con más calidad y que puede también determinar un estilo de vida mas saludable en la edad adulta y en la vejez. En este contexto, las actitudes son de gran importancia, ya que pueden predecir la motivación para el aprendizaje y la participación de los jóvenes en las actividades físicas y deportivas. Los objetivos de este estudio son evaluar las actitudes de los estudiantes de Enseñanza Secundaria ante la actividad física e identificar los factores que interfieren en ellas. Se desarrolló un estudio no - experimental, descriptivo, analítico, transversal y cuantitativo. Se seleccionó una muestra no probabilística, por accesibilidad, construida por estudiantes de la Enseñanza Secundaria, de una escuela de la Región Centro de Portugal, formada por 95 estudiantes con edad entre los 15 y 23 años, la edad media encontrada fue de 17,48 años. En la recogida de los datos, se utilizó un cuestionario sociodemográfico y una escala traducida y validada para la población portuguesa para evaluar las actitudes hacia la actividad física y el deporte, Escala de Actitudes hacia la Actividad Física y el Deporte, desarrollado por Dosil (2002). Los estudiantes que presentan actitudes más positivas hacia la actividad física, son los estudiantes más jóvenes, del sexo masculino, que frecuentan el curso científico - humanístico, los consumidores de alcohol, los que practican la actividad física y que su grupo de pares practica actividad física.</p>

Introduction

The wide range of health problems that the most developed countries usually struggle with is associated with systematic changes in lifestyle, which include the reduction of physical activity levels leading to an increasingly sedentary lifestyle. At the moment, there is ample evidence that regular and moderate physical activity has undeniable benefits for physical, psychological and social health and can contribute significantly to the overall well-being at all ages (Alves, 2005).

The notion that regular physical activity plays an important role in promoting a healthy lifestyle, and that high levels of physical activity during youth increase the likelihood of a similar behaviour in adulthood, are quite consensual.

In addition to the biological and psycho-emotional benefits, some studies have sought to emphasize that physical activity habits incorporated

in adolescence can transfer to adult ages, which highlights the importance of monitoring more closely the physical activity habits of young people (Guedes Lopes & Stanganelli, 2006).

Hagger, Chatzisanrantis & Biddle (2001) claim that attitude is the strongest predictive variable of behavioral intentions toward physical activity, as well as the subject's own behavior. This indicates that "attitude is the most important cognitive factor influencing people's decision to join the physical activity" (Hagger, Chatzisanrantis & Biddle, 2001, p. 99).

In this way, understanding the factors that influence the attitudes of secondary school students toward physical activity is essential for the development of targeted intervention programs to promote health among young people (Ribeiro & Mota, 2005).

The practice of physical activity is a current topic of interest for health professionals,

especially for nurses, for the reason that they aim to promote health and prevent disease. To promote the regular adoption of physical activity and its maintenance throughout life is a challenge for institutions, clubs, schools and local authorities. Therefore, it is essential that these structures get the necessary scientific knowledge in this field to easily meet the basic needs of the population. Regular physical activity is a health promotion factor and in order to develop more effective action, through the application of concrete and feasible measures, this research aims to evaluate the attitudes of secondary school students toward physical activity and identify the factors that affect these same attitudes.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Physical Activity

Physical activity is a phenomenon and an extremely complex behavior.

For Oliveira and Maia (2001), the definition that most meets consensus in the literature is by Caspersen (1995), cit. by Mota (1999), which considers physical activity as any body movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure. It encompasses all physical activity used for movement, both in the tasks of daily life, at work, during leisure activities, sports activities (organized or not), and in the case of children and young people, in school (Fernandes, 2005).

Regarding physical exercise, Ribeiro (2005) states that it is any physical activity that maintains or increases physical fitness in general and aims to achieve health and also recreation.

As for sport, Article 2 of the European Sports Charter for All (1992) points out that,

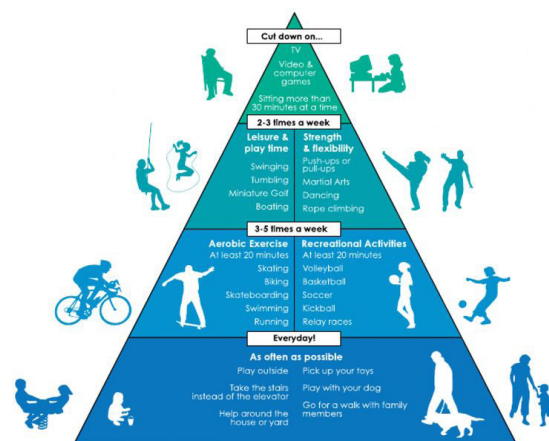
“Sport is all forms of physical activity which, through organized participation or not, are intended as an expression or aim to improve one’s physical and mental condition, the development of social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.”

Thus, sport is a physical activity that is subject to certain regulations, generally aimed at competition among practitioners. For an activity to be considered a sport it must involve motor skills and abilities, established rules and competition between opponents. Sports can be collective, double or single. Ideally, sports should be fun and entertaining, and should be a methodical way that tends to perfection and coordination of muscular effort in view of a physical and spiritual improvement of the human being (Ribeiro, 2005).

The World Health Organization (2002) emphasizes the importance of physical activity for the prevention of some cardiovascular diseases, diabetes and obesity, as a sedentary lifestyle and inactivity are factors that contribute substantially to the prevalence of these diseases.

According to Ribeiro (2005, p. 11), “to encourage physical activity the Pyramid of Physical Activity (Figure 1) was created on the basis of which are routine physical activities (walking, climbing stairs ...), which should be performed daily.” At least three times a week, exercise such as running, cycling, games (tennis, basketball ...), gym (aerobics, step, indoor cycling ...) should be done. To be performed at least twice a week, there are strength and flexibility exercises and leisure activities that are of low aerobic intensity (golf, gardening). In the pyramid vertex are sedentary activities to be reduced as much as possible (television, computer games ...).”

Figure 1. Pyramid of physical activity



This new approach provides a new potential in promoting an active lifestyles, referring to a way of life in which physical activity is valued and integrated into daily life, since the nature, intensity and frequency refer to personal interests, needs, aspirations and skills (WHO, 1997; ACSM, 2002).

In this context, physical activity is a life quality factor for all people, regardless of age or social status. It should be noted as well, that the practice of physical activity is physically and psychologically beneficial in an economic, social and environmental perspective.

1.1.1. Physical activity in young people

Calmeiro and Matos (2004) argue that the pace and the demands of life in modern societies have had good and bad consequences on many levels. Thus, there is currently in the most developed

societies, a limited availability for physical activity, since street games were replaced by television, by video games and the computer, and children start from an early age to acquire a sedentary lifestyle at the expense of physical activity.

Vieira, Priore and Fisberg (2002) state that physical activity helps in the development of the young people and reduces the risk of future disease, as well as having significant psychosocial effects. Furthermore it can also improve the physical potential determined by genetic inheritance. Together with good nutrition, adequate physical activity should be recognized as an important element for the normal growth and development during adolescence, as well as reducing the risk of future disease.

The importance of acquiring healthy lifestyle habits at this stage of life is demonstrated by the study of Azevedo Araújo, Silva and Hallal (2007), which analyzed the continuity of physical activity from adolescence to adulthood, verifying that individuals who practiced physical activity in adolescence are more likely to maintain physical activity in adulthood.

The rise in obesity and smoking among adolescents is a reality, increasing the importance of prevention and intervention in cardiovascular risk factors by promoting healthy lifestyles that include regular physical activity and reduction of dietary fats (McCrandle, 2007).

According to Vieira, Priore and Fisberg (2002) the practice of physical exercise, coupled with a satisfactory energy supply, allows an increased use of dietary protein and provides a proper skeletal development of the young people.

Specifically for the teenager, Barbosa (2002) cit. Vieira, Priore & Fisberg (2002), mentions the following benefits of physical activity: it stimulates socialization, it decreases alcohol, tobacco and drug consumption, it leads to greater commitment in the search for goals, it enhances self-esteem, it helps to balance the intake and calorie expenditure and leads to a lower predisposition to developing certain diseases.

Factors influencing physical activity in young people

According to Loureiro (2004), there are several factors that influence physical activity in youth, such as biological, demographic, psychological, behavioral and environmental, age and gender being determinants in the physical activity of adolescents. On the subject of gender, literature indicates that male subjects practice more physical activity than the female subjects. In studies by Telama and Yang (1999, cit. by Loureiro, 2004), it was found that boys are more active than girls.

However, it was also found that the decline in physical activity is more pronounced among male subjects than in females, pointing out that female subjects over 15 years old participate more often in physical activities than male subjects. For Malina and Bouchard (1991, cit. by Laurel, 2004), this difference may be the result of social and cultural influences, more than biological aspects, since biological differences at the onset of puberty are not important.

Dosil (2004) conducted a study of 2800 subjects (1245 men and 1555 women) from 12 to 92 years old, with the aim of studying the influence of gender on attitudes to physical activity, concluding that there is a tendency for men to have a more positive attitude towards physical activity than women.

Loureiro (2004) states that the gender differences also extend to other aspects related to physical activity. Males have a greater attraction for vigorous activities, are better accepted by peers (in games and sports), give greater importance to physical activity and enjoy games and sport more.

On the topic of age, studies suggest that prevention efforts focused on maintaining physical condition and activity throughout adolescence will bring positive health benefits in the future. Increasing age is inversely related to physical activity. This idea is supported by studies by Montes (S.D. cit. by Laurel, 2004). Dosil (2004) also states that attitudes to physical activity become more negative throughout life, this being more pronounced from 40-50 years old onwards.

As for the peers, Loureiro (2004) states that groups are an excellent way to share information about familiar and personal situations, leisure activities and individual interests. During adolescence, young people feel the need to impress peers of both genders in order to gain acceptance, recognition, social status and admiration, which will accelerate the parental independence process and simultaneously create a new dependence on peers.

In the case of adolescents, having one or more friends with whom they identify and who practice physical activity, will create a greater predisposition to start its practice, as well as being able to find time to incorporate it in their daily routines.

In addition to the peer group, according to Ferreira and Najar (2005), family plays a critical role in the young person's physical activity acceptance by peers, as the first opportunities and motivations for someone to become physically active begin at home. The level of physical activity of parents relates positively to the activity of children in preschool and adolescence. In this context, the results of several investigations "indican la importancia del referente deportivo de

los progenitores” (Codina & Pestana, 2012; García Ferrando, 2001, 2005; Moscoso & Moyano, 2009), “constatándose que es más probable que los hijos practiquen cuando sus padres son físicamente activos” (Cheng, Mendonca & de Farias Junior, 2014; Sanz, Ponce de León & Valdemoros, 2012; cit. por Ponce de León, Sanz & Valdemoros, 2015, p. 54).

Ferreira and Najjar (2005) state that schools and communities have the potential to improve the quality of health promotion through the creation of programs and services that promote the education of young people and encourage them to develop physical activities that can be incorporated indefinitely in their lifestyle. Most of the previous work on physical activity promotion in young people has been developed in schools, with promising results, demonstrating that the school can provide the most comprehensive educational tool for health promotion.

Nutrition is also a factor that influences physical activity, with regard to the so-called Mediterranean diet and its benefits, which is being abandoned (Martins, 2005).

According to Loureiro (2004) we should also bear in mind factors such as transportation, facilities, and youth associations, as aspects that municipalities and their own regional sports clubs should take into account to physical activity.

1.1.2. Young people's attitude towards physical activity

The concept of attitude, according to Dosil (2004) includes the behavioral intention of the subjects towards a particular object, person, context or situation, which is based on their beliefs, feelings and the way they want to act in the face of this object. He states that the concept of attitude involves three components: a) cognitive; b) affective; c) behavioral. We can say that people's behavior can be determined by their attitudes towards physical activity.

Dosil (2004) states that attitude is learned in the socialization process, that is, in the social environment in which the subject is inserted. Several social actors are responsible for the formation and modification of attitudes: parents and family (which play a key role in the formation of the child's attitude, and the models they imitate and which they identify with), school, the peer group (people with approximately same age with whom young people socialize) and the media (major informational vehicle in contemporary society and with a great importance in the formation of new attitudes and strengthening existing ones).

Over time individuals can change their attitude. The assimilation of new knowledge related to objects, by living new experiences, leads to a

decrease of its field related responses to this particular situation, which leads to new interpretations and assessments. In this context, consistent actions are carried out in order to facilitate life in society.

Páscoa and Pestana (2002, p. 26) also indicate that:

“In spite of attitude being relatively stable, it is possible to modify it through standardization processes, conformism and innovation. They are fundamental in this shift into credibility, affective tone message and receiver characteristics (more or less likely to be influenced)”.

Over the past few years, several models have been developed and used in an attempt to understand, explain and predict the participation and behavior of the subject towards physical activity.

According to an analysis by Hagger, Chatzisarantis and Biddle (2001), based on the theory of planned behavior, attitude is the strongest predictive variable of behavioral intentions toward physical activity, as well as the subject's own behavior. This indicates that attitude is the most important cognitive factor influencing people's decision to practice physical activity.

In fact, according to Biddle and Mutrie (2001), this topic is of great interest to researchers, since its predictive validity in the field of physical activity has been consistently demonstrated in different studies with different populations (young people, adults and the elderly).

For Hagger, Chatzisarantis and Biddle (2001), attitudes are a key factor which exerts a strong influence on the process of behavioral intentions of the subjects, and for this reason, interventions based on the promotion of attitudes can lead to increased adherence to practice.

The Dosil (2004) study, already mentioned, showed a positive relationship between attitudes and practice time, that is, the more hours of practice per week individuals had, the more positive was their attitude to physical activity.

Cid (2010) notes that the personal and contextual variables have a preponderant influence on the attitudes of the subjects towards physical activity and sport. The author adds that the results achieved reflect the importance of the role of attitudes in the behavior of individuals toward physical activity. It states that the involvement of the subjects with their practice promotes a more positive attitude towards physical activity, so the practitioner condition is a variable that influences the attitudes of individuals toward physical activity and sport. The type of activity practiced is a variable that influences the attitudes of individuals towards

physical activity and sport. Thus, the subjects that practice collective activities/sports have a more positive attitude towards practitioners of other activities /sports.

After contextualizing the theoretical aspects that supported this research, we present below our empirical study.

2. Methodology

A non-experimental study was developed. It was descriptive, analytical, cross-sectional and quantitative in nature, with the objective of evaluating the attitudes of secondary school students toward physical activity and identifying the factors that affect these same attitudes.

As for data collection, we used a questionnaire, which included sociodemographic characterization, smoking and drinking habits, physical activity and sedentary activities and physical activity of peers and family. To assess the attitudes we used a scale, translated and validated for the Portuguese population, to assess the attitude to physical activity and sport, Attitude Scale toward physical activity and Sport developed by Dosil (2002). The scale showed an alpha coefficient of 0.89 for Cronbach overall attitude, which shows a good internal consistency.

The selected population consists of secondary school students. For the Ministry of Education (2010) secondary education materializes in a three-year education cycle (10, 11 and 12 years), as defined in the Basic Law on Education. In this study, individuals who are the target population attend the scientific and humanistic course or professional course.

Thus, it can be noted that the sample, not probabilistic for accessibility, to which the data collection instruments were applied, consisted of secondary school students, a school of the country's central region, consisting of 95 students, aged between 15 and 23 years, with an average age of 17:48; the majority (64.2%) were females; 69.5% attended Scientific and Humanistic courses; 40.0% attended the 11th grade, 34.7% attended the 12th grade and 25.3% were students of the 10th grade. Most (84.2%) lived in rural areas.

In order to carry out our study, authorization was requested from the School Cluster Director, which belongs to the school selected for the questionnaire to students of secondary education, ensuring anonymity and confidentiality of their responses. The Director gave authorization and the questionnaires were filled in during the first week of April 2014.

A request for guardians was also sent to school, to authorize students to respond to the questionnaire.

To organize and systematize the information obtained, descriptive and inferential statistics were used, via a statistical treatment program called Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 22.0 in 2013. In the hypothesis tests the value of 0.050 was fixed for the maximum level of significance, namely for the maximum value of the probability of type I error.

3. Analysis and Interpretation of Results

Physical activity and sedentary activities

In this study it was found that 78.9% of students didn't walk to school and from the 20 that said the opposite, 55.0% took between 5 and 15 minutes on the way between home and school, followed by 30.0% who took less than 5 minutes.

As for physical activity or sport, it appears that 73.7% answered affirmatively, and of these 70 students, 72.8% practiced physical activity collectively and 27.2% physical activity individually. As we can see, the highest percentage of students practices physical activity collectively, showing the role of socialization in sports mentioned by some authors. Barbosa, cit. Vieira, Priore & Fisberg (2002), mentions the socialization stimulus as one of the greatest practical benefits of physical activity in young people.

When asked if they sat during long periods at school, 55.8% answered sometimes, 21.1% said they rarely did, and 12.6% had this attitude often. As for walking or cycling, it was found that 41.1% of students said they did this a few times, followed by 27.4% who said that they often did it and 18.9% who did it very often.

Regarding the time spent on average during the week in front of the television/computer/playstation, 36.8% reported 4 or more hours, 23.2% indicated between 3 and 4 hours and 21.1% reported time between 1 and 2 hours. When asked the same question, but with reference to the weekend, 33.7% of students reported at least 4 hours of this activity, 24.2% indicated between 2 and 3 hours, 16.8% and 15.8% reported time between 3 and 4 hours or between 1 and 2 hours, respectively.

By observing these data we find that the students who participated in the study lead a very sedentary lifestyle, which is supported by some authors as Calmeiro and Matos (2004). In fact, over 30% of students spend more than four hours a week in front of the television, computer or videogames. Even the fact that 76.8% of students spend some of the breaks sitting in school, reveals sedentary features in students.

In this context, it appears that the data goes against the percentage of sedentary lifestyle in

Portugal, which according to the European Commission (2004) is 70%. According to a study on the sporting habits of the Portuguese population (Marivoet, 2001), for the year 1998, only 23% of the Portuguese practice exercise and sport (19% do so on a regular basis and 4% occasionally). The data also confirms the statement of the Portuguese Institute of Sport (2013), that globally, it is estimated that one third of young people are not active enough to contribute to their present and future well-being.

Positively, it is noted that 87.4% of respondents walks on foot or cycle, at least sometimes, which is probably related to the rural environment in which the school is located. Another positive point is the fact that 73.7% of students practice physical activities or sports, a figure well above the 23% referred to in the Marivoet study in 2001, which may be an indicator that these young people might come to sustain their physical activity habits in adulthood.

Also positive is the fact that almost all students (90.5%) considered that the school is promoting regular physical activity/sport and 70.5% attributed great importance to the practice of these activities.

Physical activity by peers and the family

It is found that 82.1% of students said that friends/colleagues practiced these activities and that, compared to them, their practice was lighter (55.1%) and heavier (44.9%). We found that 57.9% of students said that the family practiced physical activity and when asked to specify, 61.4% mentioned their siblings and 47.4% indicated their parents.

The role of the family was also highlighted by Marques (2004), to state that the lifestyles result from habits learned during life, influenced by family, environment and society. If these habits are positive they can lead to proactive behaviors in terms of health and well-being, as individuals understand the importance of healthier lifestyles, if they can relate to examples of successful cases.

Smoking and drinking habits

Regarding smoking habits it appears that most of the students surveyed (67.4%) said they did not smoke, and from the remaining 32.6% (31), it was found that 71.0% smoked daily, followed by 25.8% who smoked occasionally.

As for the consumption of alcoholic beverages, it appears that 73.7% said they consumed such beverages; 78.6% said they did it occasionally, followed by 18.6% who reported that consumption occurred on a weekly basis.

Attitudes of students toward physical activity and sport

The application of the attitude scale of physical activity and sport allowed us to obtain the data presented in Table 1. As we can see, 36.8% of students stood on a lower average level, followed by 30.5% who stood in the medium level, 23.2% who occupied the inferior level, 6.3% of students stood at the upper average level and 3.2% at the superior level.

Non-normalized data were between 19.00 and 79.00 points, the average 51.92 points with a standard deviation of 11.69 points. Half of the students obtained at least 51.00 points (median) and the frequency distribution departed significantly from a normal or Gaussian distribution ($p = .008$).

Table 1. Student distribution according to the attitude toward physical activity and sport

Attitude toward physical activity and sport (Normalization)	N	%
Superior	3	3.2
Upper average	6	6.3
Medium	29	30.5
Lower average	35	36.8
Inferior	22	23.2

$\bar{X} = 51.92$; Md = 51.00; s = 11.69; $x_{\min} = 19.00$; $x_{\max} = 79.00$;
 $p = .008$

Factors that affect the attitudes of students toward physical activity

The results presented in Table 2, obtained by applying the Spearman correlation coefficient and the respective significance test, show that students' attitudes toward physical activity are associated with age, with the average time for physical activity / sports per week and the importance attached to physical activity/sports.

Regarding age, and the fact that the correlation is negative, it leads us to conclude that older students tend to express less positive attitudes towards physical activity, results corroborated by studies of Dosil (2004) and Cid (2010). It appears that there is a statistically significant association between attitudes and the average time for physical activity/sport per week ($p = .000$). Since the correlation is positive we can also say that students who, during the week, practice physical activity/sports for longer tend to show more positive attitudes, which was also found in studies from the authors cited above.

Observing the results in Table 2, we can also conclude that the correlation between attitudes and the importance given to physical activity/sports is positive and statistically significant ($p = .000$). Given these facts, we can conclude that students who attach more importance to physical activity / sports tend to show more positive attitudes, which goes against the opinion of Hagger, Chatzisanrantis & Biddle (2001).

Table 2. Results of the student's attitude toward physical activity/sport with age, average time of practice for physical activity/sport per week and importance given to physical activity/sport practice

Variables	Global attitude	
	r	p
Age	-.21	.038
Average time of practice for physical activity/sport per week	+.47	.000
Importance given to physical activity/sport practice	+.36	.000

The results presented in Table 3, obtained by applying the Mann-Whitney U test, showed that students' attitudes toward physical activity are associated with gender, course, drinking habits, physical activity / sport and the fact that the friends / colleagues practice physical activity.

Regarding gender, the literature indicates that men have a more positive attitude towards physical activity than women, which is also found in this study ($p = .006$).

Similarly, we proceeded to the comparison of attitudes to physical activity and sport in the course students attended. The results allowed us to conclude that the difference is statistically significant ($p = .018$) and the comparison of the values of the measures of central tendency allows us also to say that the students of Scientific and Humanistic courses showed more positive attitudes, concluding that the attitudes to physical activity and sport are associated with the course that students attend. This difference could be justified, taking into account the characteristics of professional

secondary education courses, as these, the Ministry of Education (2010) have a strong connection to the world of work and are aimed at developing skills for the practice of a profession, aimed at older students, who tend to have less positive attitudes towards physical activity. On the other hand, in vocational courses in secondary education the hours of training in the workplace are long, which may also leave less time to these students for the practice of physical activity, compared to students who attend the Scientific and Humanistic course.

It was observed that there is a statistically significant difference ($p = .041$) when comparing attitudes to physical activity and sport due to alcohol consumption. Comparison of the central tendency revealed that students who reported drinking alcohol show more positive attitudes, which contradicts the opinion of many authors that physical activity is a promoting reduction factor of alcohol consumption, which may be justified by the fact that the young participants in this study consumed alcohol in groups. Physical activity is reported by Barbosa (2002 cit. por Vieira, Priore & Fisberg, 2002), as one of the socialization factors of the young, which in this case could lead to alcohol consumption, which obviously is negative and needs further study.

The comparison of attitudes to physical activity and sport due to physical activity / sport, revealed that the association between the two variables is statistically significant ($p = .000$) and the comparison of the values of the measures of central tendency reveals that students who practice physical activity/sports shows more positive attitudes to this practice, results that are in accordance with what Cid (2010) states. It appears that the very involvement of the subjects with practice, promotes a more positive attitude towards activity.

Regarding the peer group, we proceeded to the comparison of attitudes to physical activity and sport to the fact that the friends/colleagues practice physical activity. The results show that there is a statistically significant difference ($p = .004$) and a comparison of the measures of central tendency shows that students whose friends/colleagues practice physical activity tend to show more positive attitudes, which goes against the authors/studies referred to previously.

Table 3. Results of the comparison of the attitude toward physical activity/sport by gender, course, alcoholic consumption, physical activity/sport practice and friends/colleagues who practice physical activity/sport

Variable	n	\bar{x}_{ord}	\bar{x}	Md	z / χ^2	p
Gender						
Male	34	58.40	56.59	57.00	-2.747	.006
Female	61	42.20	49.31	50.00		
Courses						
Professional	29	37.93	48.41	48.00	-2.362	.018
Scientific-Humanistic	66	52.42	53.45	52.00		
Alcohol consumption						
Yes	70	51.45	53.49	51.00	-2.043	.041
No	25	38.34	47.52	48.00		
Physical activity/sport practice						
Yes	70	55.53	55.16	53.50	-4.458	.000
No	25	26.92	42.84	45.00		
Friends/colleagues practice physical activity/sport						
Yes	78	51.83	53.49	52.00	-2.901	.004
No	17	30.44	44.71	47.00		

Conclusion

This study found that the younger male students who attend the scientific and humanistic course, consume alcohol, practice a physical activity for longer periods per week, attach more importance to physical activity and have a peer group practicing physical activity, tend to have more positive attitudes towards physical activity.

The results highlight the importance of developing a joint work that reflects an appropriate coordination between school, family, students and health services, in order to promote the practice

of physical activity and consequently the health of young people participating in the study.

This study provides a better understanding of the factors influencing the attitudes of secondary school students towards the practice of physical activity. However, it is believed that future studies in this field of research should be carried out, with larger samples, integrating the staff and teachers of educational institutions. There should also be studies linking socialization promoted by physical activity and alcohol consumption, which may contribute to a deeper knowledge of this reality.

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