



PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

W.M.N.S.Wijethunga_
naduniwijethunga@gmail.com

Keywords
COVID 19, Home Based Physical Activities

ABSTRACT

Background: The novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19) is created the main influence on physical activity behaviors globally. To protect from virus administrators are recommended to stay home and isolated. Health professionals are advised to involve physical activities to maintain physical and psychological well-being while the pandemic.

Objective: The objective of the study was to explore Sri Lankans' home-based physical activities during COVID 19 pandemic.

Design: A qualitative, interview-based investigation.

Settings: Purposive sampling was adopted with one hundred and two (47 Female, 55 Male) adult participants, aged between 19 to 59 years.

Methods: Structured with open-ended interviews were conducted. All the interviews are recorded. The Thematic analysis method was used to analyze the collected data.

Results: All of the participants are involve with new physical activity and gain several physiological and psychological benefits than being sedentary. Interestingly a considerable portion of participants is taking place in the home garden during COVID 19 pandemic, moreover, do the exercises using YouTube and play with Family members. Sri Lankan's have engaged with the home garden during the pandemic than earlier.

Conclusion: Doing any physical activity is better than doing none.

Introduction:

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a communicable illness affected by a newly discovered coronavirus. The first case identifies in Wuhan City, China on 31st December as an unknown disease and by identifying a new type of coronavirus by China Authorities named COVID 19. Subsequently on 11th March 2020 WHO Director-General declared the outbreak of COVID 19 as a public health emergency. On 15th June 2020 at 10.30 pm, 7.9 million active cases are reported from 213 Countries, and territories cause 428k deaths around the world (WHO) even though Sri Lanka reported 1888 active cases and 11 deaths, and 745 recovered patients (Health Promotion Bureau).

To protect from virus administrators are recommended to maintain at least 1 meter (3 feet) distance between person to another person, avoid going to crowded places, close the schools and universities and ban traveling, halt the organizing the cultural and sports event as well as social gatherings and advice to Stay home, and self-isolate. Protection of the health of athletes and other parties, entire sports events at all levels such as international, national, regional have been canceled or postponed. Even the 2020 summer Olympics and Paralympics were postponed for the first time in modern games history, due to Coronavirus Outbreak. Gyms, pools, stadiums, dance and fitness studios, playgrounds are close. Hence people are not able to use those places for sports and physical activities and they should have to stay home to be safe (Series, 2020).

According to Hammami et al., 2020 these actions negatively affect people's physical activity behavior. Physical activity is any physical movement formed by skeletal muscles that need energy expenditure. People can active through walking, cycling, sports, and recreation and can perform any skill (WHO, 2020). However, Exercises are the activities that are performed with plan, structure, repetitive, and have the goal of improvement or maintain physical fitness.

Home Based exercises are well suited to avoid airborne coronavirus and maintain fitness levels (Chen *et al.*, 2020). According to WHO, 2020 “any physical activity is better than none”. Most of the scholars are conducted studies on home-based physical activities during COVID 19 and found to overcome the problems which are caused since the pandemic, the best way is to involve home-based physical activities. Aerobic exercise training on a bike or rowing ergometer, bodyweight training, dance and active video gaming, Zumba dancing, Audio-visual-directed gymnastics and aerobic exercise training are recommended activities for home-based physical training (Hammami *et al.*, 2020). Public Health Scotland, 2020 suggested Walking up and downstairs, Playing, Dancing, Gardening, and Taking part in a virtual fitness class as home-based physical activities as well as WHO, 2020 suggested Simply stand up and stretch or even better take a walk around the house, Up and down the stairs, or into the garden, active with children with active games at home, House cleaning, Carrying heavy shopping, Gardening for being active during the pandemic. by conducting a study on physical activity and COVID 19 discussed active recreation, sports participation, cycling, walking, play, dance, gardening, house cleaning, carrying heavy shopping as physical activities and suggested exercise with family members, follow online exercise videos, participate, virtual classes, do the walking, cycling and hiking and involve with home chores such as mowing the lawn, working in the garden, washing the car, or cleaning out the garage as a home-based physical activity.

Staying home for a longer period leads to a lot of physical and psychological side effects such as stress, anxiety, depression, mental distress, weight gaining. Hence be active during the pandemic, help to avoid detrimental physical and mental side effects of COVID 19 and help to maintain a healthy life (Hammami et al., 2020).

Sahu, 2020 stated that social distancing creates sedentary at home for a longer period and its impact on health, social care, and mental wellbeing of people, therefore body and mind need a different type of physical activity to avoid negative impact.

For these reasons, involve home-based physical activities during the period of the pandemic, will decrease the negative physiological and psychological impacts. This study focuses on involved home-based physical activities of Sri Lankan People during a pandemic.

Methodology

Design: Qualitative study was used to address the aim of the study. This type of investigations attempts “to understand and represent the experiences and actions of people as they encounter, engage, and live through situations” (Tierney and Clemens 2011 cited by Elliot et al., 1999)

Sample: The participants were 102 adults (47 females and 55 males), aged 19-59 years who are not engaging with sports. Give complete information to the participants about the study. All participants had an open opportunity to participate in the study. Invite 150 adults to participate in the interview via Facebook Messenger and 102 are accepted the invitation. Specific information about the study sample can be obtained in Table 1.

Data Collection: Structured with open-ended interviews was adopted for the study. Interviews were carried out from May 25th to June 10th, 2020. They lasted for approximately 40 minutes. The time of the interview decides by participants and the interview conduct via Sinhala through Zoom. Scheduled questions are listed in Table 2. Start the interview by explaining the meaning of the physical activity.

Analysis: All recordings were transcribed in full for analysis. Thematic analysis was conducted to analyze the data.

Table 2: Scheduled Interview questions

-
- Personal information: age, occupation
 - What Physical Activities you do during the COVID -19 Pandemic? (Newly started activities to your everyday lifestyle)
 - What are the Sedentary behaviors performed before starting the new activities
 - What benefits did you get from those activities?
-

Table 1: Description of Demographic Characteristics

Variables	Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	55	53.92%
Female	47	46.06%
Age		
19- 30	36	35.29
31 -42	35	34.31
43-59	31	30.39
Occupation		
Government	34	33.33
Private	40	39.21
Student	20	19.60
No job	08	7.84

Results and Discussion

Analysis of interview transcripts revealed three main home-based physical activities during the lockdown period. A common trend in most of the participants 1) gardening 2) do playing badminton, carom, and do fun games with their family, 3) do Aerobics, Zumba, and bodyweight exercises using YouTube. Mongabay, Malaka Rodrigo, 15th May 2020 in his article Amid Lockdown, Sri Lanka stated as “Home gardening has boomed in Sri Lanka as residents under lockdown”. Table 4 displays the newly started home-based physical activities and sedentary behaviors were performed before starting new activities. All the participants are Watched the television/videos/movie and used the internet before starting the new physical activities.

“When I was starting the gardening, I feel relax and happy by looking the growing of the plants and it gives time to spend with my family as well as it helps to release the tension and we have time to be active”

- Merchandiser, 50 years-

“I use pots to grow vegetables and fruits on my home balcony and planting helps me to release my stress and I feel relaxed and I am happy when seen the growth of plants”. – Manager, 48 years-

“This a stressful time for us but gardening is always a pleasurable activity than watching TV and using social media. As well as gardening helps us to work together. I think COVID 19 pandemic teaches us a lot of values for our lives”. – Housewife, 58 years-

“It is perfect to be a gardener because it’s peaceful and such a joy to watch the plants grow, it helps to be active while doing house chores” -Teacher, 37 years –

“Most of the time I do watch TV and play video games or sleep in the first few weeks of the lockdown period. But because of boredom I started to play badminton and doing fun games with my son and daughter, and Helping my wife to do house choresI had a chance to stay with them, its help to reduce boredom and Depression, and had a great time with my family.” – Bank Assistant, 30 years-

“Playing fun games and play with family is a more productive activity than watching TV and using the internet. It helps us to share our ideas and helps us to be happy.”- Beautician, 25 years –

“Doing any physical activity is better than being sedentary with watching TV, sleeping using social media” – Student, 20 years-

“I find a great time to do aerobics exercises with my parents by using YouTube, it helps us to be active and reduce the homestay boredom, stress, and tension. By helping Amma, to do house chores such as sweeping, cooking, tidying, I feel happy and confident in my abilities and had a great with her” – University Student, 23 year –

Table 3: Home Based physical activities and sedentary behaviors

Home-based physical activities

Gardening
Exercises using YouTube
Playing with family members
Housework and domestic Chores
Jogging or running around the house
skipping with a rope
Paintings
Yoga

Sedentary behaviors performed before starting the new activities

Watching television/videos/movie
Internet/emailing/electronic media for leisure
Playing computer or video games
Listening to music
Reading a book/magazine
doing inactive hobbies

Source: Author 2020 survey data

Table 3 displays a summary of the physiological and psychological considerations of involved Physical Activities.

Table 3: physiological and psychological considerations

Physiological

Help to reduce weight gaining
Help to develop the immunity
Reduce a sedentary lifestyle
Improve the sleep

Psychological

Relieves Stress and Anxiety
Reduce boredom
Boost self-Esteem
Feel happy by working with family
Reduce depression
Feel Relax in the mind
Relieves the tension

Source: Author 2020 survey data

Be active during the pandemic, help to avoid detrimental physical and mental side effects of COVID 19, and help to maintain a healthy life (Hammami et al., 2020). Home-based physical activities during the period of the pandemic will decrease the negative physiological and psychological impacts. Home-based activities are help people to stay fit and healthy by practicing simple movements when staying at home (Journal and Advance, 2020). People should have to concern about their mental health and it is very important to fight sickness. Home gardening is useful to stress buster and these activities are given more productive family time and useful to maintain physical health Rodrigo, M (2020).

Conclusion

This study aimed to explore the home-based physical activities of Sri Lankan's during a COVID 19 pandemic. The study finds that Sri Lankans have engaged with the home garden during the pandemic than earlier. Furthermore, finds that involvement with physical activities is beneficial to maintain physical and psychological health during the lockdown period. Finally, it can be concluded doing anything is better than doing none.

References

- Chen, P. *et al.* (2020) 'Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): The need to maintain regular physical activity while taking precautions', *Journal of Sport and Health Science*, 9(2), pp. 103–104. DOI: 10.1016/j.jshs.2020.02.001.
- Hammami, A. *et al.* (2020) 'Physical activity and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): specific recommendations for home-based physical training', *Managing Sport and Leisure*, 0(0), pp. 1–6. DOI: 10.1080/23750472.2020.1757494.
- Journal, I. and Advance, O. (2020) 'PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND COVID-19', (May).
- RODRIGO, M. (2020, MAY 15). 'AMID LOCKDOWN, SRI LANKANS NURTURE THEIR OWN OASES THROUGH HOME GARDENING', FROM MONGABAY WEB SITE: NEWS.MONGABAY.COM
- Series, P. B. (2020) 'A Compilation by UN DESA'.
- World, O. H. (2020) 'Co V I D - 19 Strategy Up Date', (April), p. 18.

© GSJ