

Analyzing Doctors' Knowledge of the United Kingdom Chief Medical Officer's Guidelines for Physical Activity: Survey of Secondary Care Doctors in a District General Hospital

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Abstract : The benefits of exercise for the prevention and management of chronic disease are well established and the importance of primary care practitioners in promoting exercise is becoming increasingly recognized. However, those with severe manifestations of the chronic disease are managed in a secondary care setting. Secondary care practitioners, therefore, have a role to play in promoting physical activity. **Methods:** In order to assess secondary care doctors' knowledge of the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for physical activity, a 12-question survey was administered to staff working in a district general hospital in South England during team and unit meetings. Questions related to knowledge of the current guidelines for both 19 - 64 year olds and older adults (65 years and above), barriers to exercise discussion or prescription and doctors' own exercise habits. Responses were collected anonymously and analyzed using SPSS Version 24.0. **Results:** 96 responses were collected. Doctors taking part in the survey ranged from foundation years (26%) to consultants (40%). 17.7% of participants knew the guidelines for moderate intensity activity for 19 - 64 year olds. Only one participant knew all of the guidance for both 19 - 64 year olds and older adults. While 71.6% of doctors felt they were adequately informed about how to exercise, only 45.6% met the minimum recommended guidance for moderate intensity activity. **Conclusion:** More work is needed to promote the physical activity guidelines and exercise prescription to doctors working within a secondary care setting. In addition, doctors require more support to personally meet the recommended minimum level of physical activity.

Keywords : exercise is medicine, exercise prescription, physical activity guidelines, exercise habits

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