BODY IMAGE ASSOCIATION AND HABITUAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN INSTITUTIONALIZED ELDERLY.

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Introduction: Research clearly shows that physical activity (PA) is one important factor in developing and maintaining good health and function in older people. Knowledge of the underlying processes that influence the elderly to initiate and maintain lifestyle changes is an important requirement for the development of a PA intervention. The aim of this study is to analyse the variation of the body image at its component parts of perception and satisfaction and the habitual PA in institutionalized old people of both genders who are physically active or not.

Methods: The sample (n=33; 77.6 ± 5.75, years) was divided into two different groups, the Physical Active Group (PAG, n =18) and the Physical Inactive Group (PIG, n = 15). The PAG comprises 10 females and 8 males and PIG comprises 6 females and 9 males. The perception of the body image was assessed by the Body Size Estimation Method; the satisfaction with the body image was assessed by the Body Image Satisfaction Questionnaire. The questionnaire Physical Activity Scale for the Elderly (PASE) was used to evaluate the habitual PA.

We adopted the following statistical procedures: Descriptive Statistics (mean, standard deviation and frequency distribution) and Inferential Statistic (nonparametric tests for independent samples, Mann Whitney U and Chi-Square test).

Results: The following results have shown that in average, no statistics significance was found between the mean of satisfaction with the body image, when comparing genders and the physically active elderly and the physically inactive elderly.

Conclusion: The main conclusions are: (i) the perceptions of the body image do not differ between old people, neither in gender nor in PA; (ii) the satisfaction with the body image does not differ in gender neither in PA; (iii) the habitual PA does not differ in gender.

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