

Comments on “Leisure Time Physical Activity and Risk of Developing Depression among the Youth of Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh, India”

Sir,
Singh *et al.*^[1] studied the association between leisure-time physical activity and the cross-sectional prevalence of depression among the youth of Kangra district in Himachal Pradesh. Although this was a prospective study, they used only a single measure of physical activity and only a single measure of depression, and they examined very few confounding and mediating variables. Given that the association between physical activity and mental health has been known for decades,^[2,3] their study breaks no new ground.

Curiously, although they sampled adults, they administered the Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale for Children. Besides being inappropriate for adults, this instrument has not been validated in the Indian population, and there is no support for the validity of the score used to define caseness in the Kangra sample. This scale has also been criticized for being non-specific, with ill-defined cut-off values.^[4]

Further, by excluding persons with diagnosed mental health problems, the authors might have excluded depression, which was the very outcome that they sought to identify using their screening instrument.

Finally, they operationalized leisure-time physical activity and depression scores as categorical variables instead of as continuous variables; categorization of continuous data in statistical analysis has many limitations and should not be performed unless there are specific reasons to do so.^[5,6]

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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