Factors Affecting Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior in University Students: A Cross-Sectional Study

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BACKGROUND
- University students' reduction in physical activity and increases in sedentary behaviors are harmful to their health.
- There is a lack of studies on the university students' sedentary behaviors conducted in Taiwan.

PURPOSE
To determine the current state of physical activity and sedentary behavior and their influencing factors among university students in Taiwan.

METHODS
- A cross-sectional survey of 531 students from 3 universities in central Taiwan (513 valid responses).
- Research tools: International Physical Activity Questionnaires (IPAQ)-Taiwan short form (self-administered), sedentary behavior questionnaire (SBQ), self-efficacy for physical activity, self-efficacy for reducing sedentary behaviors, self-regulation for sitting less and moving more, social support for physical activity, physical activity environments on campus, and personal characteristics.
- Inferential statistics were used for the data analysis.

MAIN RESULTS
- 36% of university students did not achieve the recommended amount of physical activity.
- Over 60% engaged in too much sedentary behaviors (≥8 hr/day).
- Male students engaged in more physical activity and less sitting time than their female counterparts.
- Results from multiple regression analyses showed that peer support for physical activity was a significant predictor for both sexes. However, self-efficacy for physical activity was significant only for the males, while self-regulation for sitting less and moving more was significant only for the females.
- None of the variables that showed statistical significance with the sedentary behavior in both sexes.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION
- Gender differences in physical activity levels and its determinants highlight the need for developing physical activity interventions for males and females differently.
- We suggest that the university’s health promotion practitioners adopt different strategies for male and female students, design diverse and interesting types of physical activity to increase participation, plan intervention programs to increase university students' self-efficacy for physical activity (mainly for males), self-regulation for sitting less and moving more (mainly for females), and peer support for physical activity to increase students’ physical activity levels.