

Effects of COVID-19 in physical activity and sedentary behaviour in Catalan adults

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Background: The COVID-19 pandemic and the social measures have had an enormous impact on people's lifestyles. Health services have oriented their agendas to COVID-19 to tackle it.

Purpose: To study the impact of lockdown on PA levels.

Methods: The ad hoc questionnaire "Health during coronavirus lockdown" was designed (130 questions) and sent through social networks between April 21st and May 20th. PA and sedentary behaviour were registered with the IPAQ – International Physical Activity Questionnaire – and compared with pre-lockdown data of the Catalan Health Survey (CHS).

Results: 37,810 Catalan residents, older than 15 years, participated: 74.1% women, 57.3% of which had a university degree, and 60.9% were actively working.

During the lockdown period, 50.2% of the population had been sitting for more than 6 hours a day, which means a significant increase in sedentary lifestyle compared to 35.3% before lockdown. During lockdown 34.8% of people reported having a low level of PA compared to 17.9% observed in the 2018 CHS. 19.4% of Catalans performed intense PA during lockdown vs. 26.5% before the pandemic. Moderate levels of PA decreased to 45.7% during lockdown in comparison to the previous of 55.7%. Trends are similar for men and women, and among different age groups.

Conclusions: Lockdown is related to a deterioration of healthy lifestyles. It is significantly associated with sedentary behaviour and physical inactivity. It should be important to reinforce physical activity programmes through health resources.

Funding: This study is funded by the Public Health Agency of the Ministry of Health of the Government of Catalonia together with IDIAP Jordi Gol and ESADE.

Keywords: COVID-19, health promotion, physical activity, sedentary behaviour