

Low back pain among physical therapy students in Zefat Academic College

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Abstract

Background: Low back pain (LBP) is one of the most common musculoskeletal disorders, related to multifactorial reasons such as an excessive physical load, obesity, and smoking. Although the prevalence of LBP increases with age, its incidence among students is relatively high and reaches up to 80%. In addition, there is some evidence that physical therapy studies are a risk factor for the development of LBP.

Objectives: To assess the prevalence of LBP among physical therapy students at the Zefat Academic College and to examine whether gender and/or class level are associated with LBP.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey of the prevalence of LBP was conducted using an online anonymous questionnaire during the 2019-2020 academic year. The students were asked to self-report some demographic details and data regarding their physical activity and stress levels. One-way ANOVA and T-tests were used to compare the prevalence of LBP by class level and gender, and Chi square test was used for the non-parametric variables. Logistic regression analysis was also used in this study.

Results: One hundred and thirty seven physical therapy students participated in the study, with 79 of them female (58%). Our results revealed that 71% of these students had suffered from LBP between once a day to once a month during the last year. No

significant difference was found in the prevalence of LBP according to the students' year of study ($p=0.121$). In addition, being female was found to be a risk factor for LBP ($OR=3.055$, $P=0.011$).

Conclusions: Our results show that the prevalence of LBP among physical therapy students at Zefat Academic College is 71%. In addition, LBP was gender dependent but unrelated to class level.

Keywords: LBP, physical therapy students, stress and physical activity.