

Physiotherapy students maintain a healthier lifestyle than other students in the Faculty of Health Sciences - Cross-sectional Survey

Asaf Stern, BPT¹, Itzhak Zach Cohen, BPT²,
Noa Ben Ami, PT, PhD³

¹ Asaf Stern, Physical therapist, Clalit Health Services at Kryat Ono physical therapy clinic

² Itzhak Zach Cohen, Physical therapist, Developmental Kindergarten on behalf of Ariel University, Rishon Lezion

³ Dr. Ben Ami, Senior Lecturer at Department of Physiotherapy, Faculty of Health Sciences, Ariel University

Abstract

Background: Health promotion is an important area in the health professions, both for the therapist and for the patient. The literature indicates that clinicians who maintain a healthy lifestyle promote the health of their patients as well.

Objectives: To examine the lifestyle of students in the Faculty of Health Sciences at Ariel University through an online survey, and to conduct a comparison between students in the Physiotherapy Department and students in other departments.

Methods: A cross-sectional survey was conducted using an online questionnaire that addresses the health behaviors of students. The questionnaire was sent to all departments in the Faculty of Health Sciences (Physiotherapy, Communication Disorders, Nursing, Nutrition, Pre-Medicine, and Health Systems Management). A comparison was made between physiotherapy students and other students in the Faculty of Health Sciences. The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of Ariel University.

Results: Physiotherapy students were found to report a healthier lifestyle than other students in the Faculty of Health Sciences. Physiotherapy students performed more intense ($P=0.01$) and moderate physical activity ($P<0.001$). Physiotherapy students reported a lower smoking rate than others ($P=0.006$), and a lower incidence of somatic symptoms such as back pain ($P=0.032$) and headache ($P<0.001$).

Conclusions: Physiotherapy students lead a healthier lifestyle than students in other departments of the Faculty of Health Sciences. The limitations of the study were the small samples from each department relative to the Physiotherapy Department.

Keywords: health promotion, healthy lifestyle, physiotherapy students