

1 2011

ANNALS OF  
**RESEARCH IN SPORT  
AND  
PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

FACULDADE DE  
CIÊNCIAS DO  
DESPORTO E  
EDUCAÇÃO FÍSICA  
DA UNIVERSIDADE  
DE COIMBRA  
IMPRESA  
DA UNIVERISDADE  
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ESTIMATED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY  
AND INACTIVITY IN URBAN  
MEXICAN SCHOOL YOUTH

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare estimates of physical activity and physical inactivity in urban Mexican school youth.

A cross-sectional survey was conducted with 1085 school youth (525 males, 560 females), 9-18 years of age resident in Mexico City. Socioeconomic status (SES) was estimated. The Physical Activity Questionnaire (PAQ) was used to estimate activity over the past week. Television and video game time were noted. Height and weight were measured; the BMI was calculated. Youth were classified as normal weight, overweight or obese using international criteria. MANOVA was used to compare physical activity and inactivity by SES, age group (9-10, 11-13, and 14-18 years) within and between sexes, and by weight status.

The most common non-sport physical activities are walking and jogging in girls and jogging, walking and bicycling in boys. Frequent ( $\geq 3$  times per week) participation in sport activities is more common among boys than girls. Within each age group and sex, PAQ scores and screen time do not differ by SES, and boys are more physically active than girls. Boys spend more time playing video games than girls at all ages. Younger males and females have higher activity scores than the oldest group. Correlations between the BMI and the PAQ score are low. Estimated physical activity and screen time do not differ among youth by weight status.

The majority of urban Mexican youth in this sample had insufficient physical activity and seemingly too much inactivity, both of which have negative implications on health status.

**KEYWORDS:** Youth, Physical activity, BMI, Mexico City.

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