FACTORS PREDICTING PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN OLDER THAI ADULTS LIVING IN URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this cross sectional descriptive study was to determine the factors predicting physical activity in older Thai adults living in urban poor communities including physical activity self-efficacy, social support, perceived physical health, perceived mental health, a sense of community, and the neighborhood environment and facilities. The model was based on the Pender Health Promotion Model and the Social Ecological Model. Multi-stage random sampling was used to obtain a sample of 258 older adults living in urban poor communities throughout Bangkok Metropolitan. The structured interview was employed with eight questionnaires including: the demographic questionnaire, the Modified Physical Activity for Older Thai Adults Questionnaire, the Physical Activity Self-Efficacy Questionnaire, the Social Support for Physical Activity Questionnaire, the Neighborhood Environment Scale, the Sense of Community Scale, the Short Form-36 Health Survey (SF 36: the physical composite summary), and the Health Related Self Reported (HRSR) Scale: The Diagnostic Screening Test for Depression in Thai Population. The data were analyzed by descriptive statistics and Path analysis.

The results indicated that the final model fit the data well and explained 33% of the variance in physical activity, 51% of the variance in physical activity self-efficacy, and 22% of the variance in a sense of community. Physical activity self-efficacy was the most powerful predictor in explaining physical activity. A sense of community and perceived physical health had a positive direct effect on physical activity and a positive indirect effect on physical activity through physical activity self-efficacy. Perceived mental health had a negative indirect effect on physical activity through physical activity self-efficacy but had a positive direct effect on physical activity. Neither social support nor neighborhood environment and facilities significantly predicted physical activity; however, social support had a positive indirect effect on physical activity through a sense of community, and neighborhood environment and facilities had a positive indirect effect on physical activity through a sense of community and physical activity self-efficacy.

The findings suggest that enhancing physical activity self-efficacy, a sense of community, and perceived physical health can increase physical activity in this population. The knowledge gained from this study provides a greater understanding of the determinants of physical activity for older Thai adults living in urban poor communities, which can be used to develop an effective intervention or guideline for promoting physical activity and can also be used as a source for further study.

KEY WORDS: PHYSICAL ACTIVITY/ OLDER THAI ADULTS/ URBAN POOR COMMUNITIES/ A SENSE OF COMMUNITY / PHYSICAL ACTIVITY SELF-EFFICACY

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This study was a cross-sectional study with the purpose of examining the relationships between physical activity and factors influencing physical activity, including support, health status, subjective well-being, and environmental conditions. The study sample consisted of 258 older adults living in poor urban communities in Bangkok, Thailand. The study used a multiple-stage random sampling method, and data were collected using a standardized questionnaire and self-report measures. Statistical analysis revealed that support and environmental conditions had a positive influence on physical activity, while health status and subjective well-being had a negative influence. The study found that physical activity was significantly predicted by support and environmental conditions, suggesting the importance of developing targeted interventions to improve physical activity in older adults living in urban poor communities.

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