

## Health Promoting Lifestyle and Its Associated Factors Among Undergraduate Students in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka

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**Abstract:** Health promoting life style is the main strategy to improve health status of an individual .The objective of this study was to assess the health promoting lifestyle and its determinants among undergraduate students.

A descriptive cross -sectional study was conducted among 380 students in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya .Health-promoting lifestyle was measured using Walker's health-promoting lifestyle profile II) HPLP II.( Weight and height of the students were measured using electronic weight scale and stadiometer .Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25 and 0.05 p value was considered as the level of significance .Out of 380 students 70.5 %were females and 29.5 %were males .The total mean score of HPLP II was  $120.69 \pm 16.51$  .Spiritual growth had the highest score  $24.16 \pm 5.18$  (in subscales and the lowest was physical activity)  $14.39 \pm 4.02$  .(Mean BMI of the students was  $21.28 \pm 3.47$  .Religion ) $p=0.024$ (, course of study)  $P=0.008$  (and involvement in leisure activities)  $p<0.001$  ( were significantly associated with the HPLP II total score .Majority )92.4 (%of them stated that they have barriers towards implementing health promoting lifestyle at the university and the lack of time was the most common barrier .Health promoting lifestyle of the students was at moderate level and the identified barriers should be addressed to improve the healthy life styles among this student population.

**Keywords** :University Students, Health Promoting Lifestyle, Sri Lanka

### Introduction:

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity )WHO,1948 .( The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion, political beliefs, economic or social condition .The most important Health Promoting Behaviours )HPB( include healthy eating, physical activities, stress management, interpersonal communication, spiritual growth, and health responsibility )Shaheen *et al.*, 2015.( Healthy eating or nutrition involves correct selection and consumption of foods that essential for health and well-being )Walker, Sechrist and Pender, 1995 .(Physical activity means bodily movement that is produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles which substantially increases energy expenditure )Fuchs, 2015 .( Stress is a collection of physiological, emotional, behavioral and cognitive reactions that occur in response to a stressor .Stress should be managed very well to maintain a healthy lifestyle )Mehta and Sharma, 2015 .( Interpersonal relationship is a connection or an association between two or more people .Spiritual growth means an increased depth of awareness, connection to the transcendent, search for ultimate meaning and engage in spiritual activities )Brown, 2012 .(Health responsibility means being responsible for one's own personal health )Steinbrook, 2006 .(The living way of individuals, families, and societies called a lifestyle .It can be

healthy or unhealthy .A healthy lifestyle important for good quality of life and an unhealthy lifestyle is the important risk factor contributing to the progression of suboptimal health status into a disease condition )Mehri *et al.*, 2016 .(Health-promoting lifestyle is a determinant of health to maintain a healthy lifestyle )Masina and , Tomislav and Madzar, 2017.( To measure the level of health-promoting lifestyle of an individual mainly six dimensions of health are used .They are physical activity, nutrition, stress management, health responsibility , interpersonal relationships, and self-actualization) Shaheen *et al.*, 2015.(

University students are a distinct group of students who have unique needs and problems .They have particular physical, social and emotional characteristics .Since they are at young age, they believe that they are in good health condition and they do not need to maintain a health-promoting lifestyle )Mehri *et al.*, 2016.( Students 'health status and behaviours may be affected by their circumstances )Peker and Bermek, 2011 .( Moreover, students are away from parents and they enter a period of new independence . This leads to rapid changes in body, mind, and relationships .Also, students who live independently are subject to less parental control that can inhibit healthy behaviour . Such students are more prone to have poor eating habits, lack of sleep, or the acquisition of new habits, such as smoking or usage of drugs .All these factors do not contribute positively to the development of a healthy lifestyle .Because of unhealthy lifestyles, students are subjected to experience stress, impaired eating and sleeping disturbances, gastrointestinal disturbances, body weakness, and mental problems .It affects the learning activities of the students and as well as the social reactions of the students .Therefore, university life is the best time and place that can provide education regarding health promotion for the young people )Peker and

Bermek, 2011 .(It is important to maintain a health-promoting lifestyle among university students because they are educated well and their behaviour affects the health status and well -being of the society )Garrusi, Safizadeh and Pourhosseini, 2008.(

Especially the university students who are going to be health workers are expected to be role models in society .It is assumed that health workers who adopt and display healthy lifestyle behaviours throughout their professional lives can motivate their patients to improve their health, which can also contribute to improving health care from the viewpoint of public health )Wolf, 1994 .(The general objective of the study was to assess the health-promoting lifestyle and its determinants among undergraduate students in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya and also it was conducted to determine the relationship in between health-promoting lifestyle behavior subscales, to assess the relationship between health-promoting lifestyle behaviors and socio-demographic characteristics and to identify the barriers towards implementing health-promoting lifestyle behaviors among undergraduate students in, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya.

### **Methodology:**

This was a descriptive cross- sectional study conducted among 380 undergraduate students in Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. Stratified random sampling method was used as the sampling technique. Data was collected using a pre-validated, pre-tested, self-administered questionnaire .No changes were done to the questionnaire after the pre-test and the medium of the questionnaire was English .The questionnaire consisted of 4 parts, part A – Anthropometric measurements, part B -socio-demographic data, part C -HPLP II )Walker's Health Promoting Life Style Profile II (and part D -Barriers towards implementing health

promoting life style .Weight and height of the students were measured using electronic weight scale and stadiometer .Data was analyzed using SPSS version 25.0 and Categorical data was described by using frequencies and percentages giving the 95 % confident intervals .Continuous scale data was described by using mean and Standard Deviation )SD .(Associated factors were analyzed using odds ratios and the significances were assessed at the *p* value of 0.05.

**Results and Discussion:**

The study enrolled 380 undergraduate students, of which 70.5 %were females and 29.5 %were males .Response rate was 90.05 .%Mean BMI of the students was 21.28±3.47 .The total mean score of HPLP II was 120.69±16.51 .Spiritual growth had the highest score )24.16±5.18) in subscales and the lowest was physical activity )14.39±4.02) .

Table1: Students’ HPLP II scores (n=380)

HPLP II and subscale of HPLP	Mi	Max	Mean	SD
Health responsibility	0	33	17.49	4.14
Physical activity	5	27	14.39	4.02
Nutrition	0	33	17.49	4.14
Spiritual growth	0	36	24.16	5.18
Interpersonal relationship	9	36	23.93	4.67
Stress management	3	32	19.56	3.89
<b>Total HPLP II</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>120.69</b>	<b>16.51</b>

Similar to the present study, a cross -sectional, descriptive study was conducted to assess the Health-promoting lifestyle profile and associated factors among the medical students in a Saudi university .The sample was 243

medical students .The total HPLP II was 123.8±19.8 .The total HPLP II score were same in both studies .Though the participants in both studies were medical related students, their total HPLP II values were moderate )Alzahrani *et al.*, 2019.(

Certain demographic factors were significantly associated with the HPLP II total score such as religion )*p*=0.024(, course of study )*P*=0.008 (and involvement in leisure time activities )*P*=0.016.(

Table 2: Distribution of HPLP scores according to demographic characteristics

Descriptive feature	Health responsibility	Physical activity	Nutrition	Spiritual growth	Interpersonal relationship	Stress management	HPLP II Total
Age	0.275	0.089	0.449	0.015 *	0.102	0.489	0.583
Gender	0.434	0.006 *	0.085	0.358	0.238	0.725	0.520
Religion	0.905	0.965	0.290	0.002 *	0.354	0.010 *	0.024 *
Academic year	0.739	0.001 *	0.996	0.299	0.012 *	<0.001 *	0.249
Courses	0.001 *	0.006 *	0.115	0.016 *	0.218	0.428	0.008 *
Current living status	0.001 *	0.042 *	0.052	0.889	0.341	0.613	0.092

Leisure Activities							
P	0.034*	0.016*	0.016*	0.016*	0.016*	0.016*	0.016*

\* p values are significant at 0.05

In a college based cross-sectional study conducted among college students in India had a mean of 138.69 as the total HPLP score (Senjam and Singh, 2012). (Comparing to the present study, slight deviations could be identified in the mean scores. Above study found that female students had higher sense of health responsibility comparing to male students. Furthermore, male students were more likely to engage in physical activities than female students. Other sub scales were similar in both male and female students. The present study also found that male students are more likely to engage in physical activity than female. This might be due to nature of males as they are more involved in outdoor activities, games and exercise etc.

Table 3: Correlation between sub scales of HPLP

Subscales	Physical activity	Health responsibility	Nutrition	Inter-personal relations	Stress management	Spiritual growth
Physical activity (r=)		0.290	0.245	0.158	0.219	0.203
Health responsibility (r=)			0.254	0.316	0.096	0.100
Nutrition (r=)				0.338	0.281	0.347
Interpersonal relations (r=)					0.361	0.491

Stress management (r=)	0.219	0.096	0.281	0.361	0.547
Spiritual growth (r=)	0.203	0.100	0.347	0.491	0.547

There was a statistically significant linear relationship between most of the sub scales in HPLPII. The direction of the relationship was positive, meaning that these sub scales tend to increase together. For example, higher interpersonal relationships associated with good stress management among the participants. Although statistically significant linear relationship is not able in most of the sub scales in HPLPII the magnitude of strength of the association is approximately moderate.

Table 4: Barriers towards implementing health promoting lifestyle

Type of barrier	frequency	Percentage %
Lack of time	325	86.3
Lack of guidance	98	25.8
Lack of resources	100	26.3
Lack of personal interest	72	18.9
Financial problems	131	34.5

Majority 351)92.4 (%of the students have stated that they have barriers towards implementing health promoting lifestyle at the university and the lack of time was the most common barrier.

### Conclusion:

Health promoting lifestyle of the undergraduates was at moderate level. Religion, course of study and involvement in leisure time activities were significantly associated with the HPLP II total score. There was a statistically significant positive linear relationship between most of the subscales, but the magnitude was approximately moderate. Most common barriers towards

maintaining health promoting lifestyle activities were lack of time and financial problems .Therefore, this study emphasizes the importance of addressing the barriers towards maintaining healthy life styles among this university student population.

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