

## Participation in Strength Training Activities and Perceived Benefits among Female Undergraduates

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The functional and physiologic adaptations of the body in response to strength training (ST) are of greater importance in the management of a healthy and fit lifestyle. Even though these adaptations are similar among women and men, sex and age differences still exist in the participation of ST. Especially among the undergraduate population, a decline in participation in ST, despite the perceived benefits and importance, is observed worldwide. Therefore, this study aimed to compare the participation in ST activities with the perceived benefits and importance of ST activities among female undergraduates. Female undergraduates (n=192) of Faculty of Science, University of Colombo were randomly selected to conduct this descriptive cross-sectional study. An interviewer administered questionnaire was used to collect data about the participation in ST, perceived importance, and perception of benefits of ST activities. The mean age of the participants was 22.66. The majority (89.1%; n= 171) were not ST participants, but 87.5% (n= 168) perceived ST as an important activity. More than half of the undergraduates in ST (52.3%, n=11) and 43.8% in non-ST group (n=75) perceived health benefits as the most important benefit. A Similar percentage of students perceived improving body image as the second most important benefit (ST- 23.8%, n=5; non-ST- 25.7%, n=44). Perceived benefits significantly varied among ST and non-ST groups according to Fisher's exact test (p<0.005). However, the perceived importance of ST did not significantly vary between the two groups. Participation in ST among female undergraduates is very low even though most students identified the benefits and importance. Further research should be conducted to identify the causes of the lack of participation in ST in spite of the available resources.

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