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Does family support affect physical activity of patients with COPD? An exploratory study

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Abstract

Introduction: Despite the well-recognised benefits of regular physical activity (PA) in COPD, a large number of patients are inactive. Previous research has highlighted that family support may affect PA levels of healthy people. However, the influence of family members on PA levels of patients with COPD has never been explored.

Objective:To assess PA levels of patients with COPD and explore the influence of family members on this health behaviour.

Methods: Eighteen patients (66.2±11.7 years, FEV_1 67.2±20.7pp) and their respective family members (57.7±12.4 years) completed the Portuguese version of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire short-form (IPAQ-sf), which provides information about the amount of PA performed in the last 7 days. This was reported as Metabolic Equivalents-minutes spent per week (MET-min/wk) and sitting time per day. Descriptive statistics were conducted and a stepwise multiple linear regression analysis was used to evaluate whether family members' PA variables were associated with patients' PA.

Results: Patients spent a median of 1386.0 (interquartile range [IQR]=2255.5) MET-min/wk and family members spent 862.5 (IQR=1533.0) MET-min/wk. Self-reported sitting time was 4.0 (IQR=2.3) h/day for patients and 3.0 (IQR=3.25) h/day for family members. Family members' MET-min/wk (B=0.957, p=0.021) and sitting time (B=-10.319, p=0.015) were significant predictors of patients' MET-min/wk (F(2,15)=6.438, p=0.010; $r^2_{adjusted}$=0.39).

Conclusion: Findings suggest that family members influence the PA levels of patients with COPD. Therefore, the inclusion of the family in rehabilitation interventions might facilitate the increase of patients' PA.