**FACTORS ASSOCIATED TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG WOMEN RESIDING IN IMIZAMO YETHU INFORMAL SETTLEMENT IN CAPE TOWN.**

by

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A mini-thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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**ABSTRACT**

**Background:** Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for coronary heart diseases, with inactive and unfit people almost twice more likely to die from coronary heart disease than more active and fit people (DoH, 2004). According to the American Heart Association inactive people are twice as likely as active people to die from cardiovascular disease. Physical inactivity has been associated with chronic diseases and health risks such as coronary heart diseases and obesity. Physical inactivity is the most prevalent risk factor for CHD. **Aim:** To establish the level of physical activity and factors associated to physical activity among women residing in Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Cape Town. **Objectives:** To determine the level of physical activity and inactivity among women residing in Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Cape Town. To investigate the factors associated to physical activity among women residing in Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Cape Town.

**Method:** This study is a cross-sectional quantitative survey. The study was conducted in Imizamo Yethu informal settlement, Cape Town. This township consists of predominantly informal housing. Participants who took part in this study are black women of the age between 20-60 years old living in Imizamo Yethu Township, Cape Town. Sample size calculation: Using Epi Info version 3.2 (CDC, 2004), the sample size was calculated to be 323 at 80% power and a 95% confidence level, using the following assumptions based on lack of time for exercise being the most important factor associated with inactivity.

The researcher has administered questionnaire with closed-ended questions to collect data. Descriptive statistics has been calculated for all factors, and the relative risk (RR), 95% confidence interval around the RR, and Chi-square p-values for each factor has been calculated using STATA version 10.

**Findings:**

A total of 323 women participated in the study. The age of the participants ranged between 20-60 years. About a half of the participants were aged between 20-30 years, while a quarter of them aged between 30-40 years. A half of the women were unemployed (50%), and almost a half was employed 46%. Of those participants who were employed, 23.5% were domestic workers. The majority of participants received education at secondary level (75%), primary level (16), tertiary education or higher (7%) and no formal education (2%).

Among women who were interviewed, over half of the participants (n=323), (57,9%) reported that they have not participated in any kind of physical activity and only 42% reported participation in physical activity. In this study, the overall findings indicated that the participants had acceptable level of physical activity. However, of the women employed (n=156), 68.6% reported that the nature of their work made them to have some sort of physical activity. About three in four women had no or low physical activity participation (73.7 %), and they showed acceptable level of household physical activity (80.5%) which may be caused by active participation in daily chores like fetching water from the communal tap, washing clothes with hands etc.

Attitude, age, total physical activity and support were correlated. The correlated variables have shown a significant positive relationship (r=.141) between social support and level of physical activity among women residing in Imizamo Yethu at P-value < =.05. Eight variables were analysed using Chi-square, only two variables were found with significantly relationship with level of physical activity, namely age (p = .03) and employment status (p=.01). The participants who were employed have higher proportion of acceptable level of physical activity (61.7%) than the unemployed group (44.4%). This has indicated that the employment status and nature of work influences women to have some sort of physical activity.

**Conclusion:** The findings indicate that participants in this study had acceptable levels of physical activity. Although the study shows that about three in four women had no or low physical activity participation, the findings showed acceptable level of household physical activity which may be caused by active participation in daily chores like fetching water from the communal tap, washing clothes with hands etc.

**DECLARATION**

I declare that the mini-dissertation hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of Masters in Public Health, **Factors associated to physical activity among women residing in Imizamo Yethu informal settlement in Cape Town** has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

X Jabe (Mr) March 2010

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**Definition of Terms**

**Concept Definition**

**Physical activity:** Any body movements produced by skeletal muscles and in a substantial over the resting energy expenditure.

**Leisure Physical activity:** Activity taken at individual’s discretional time that leads to a significant increase in the total daily expenditure.

**Exercise** Form of physical activity undertaken with a specific external objective such as improvement of fitness, physical performance or health.

**Sport** Form of physical activity that involves competition and games.

**Fitness** Ability to perform work satisfaction.

**Health** Human condition with physical, social, and psychological dimensions.

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

CHD Coronary heart disease

CDC Centre for Disease Control and Prevention

DoH Department of Health

DALYs Disability-adjusted life years

MREC Medunsa Research Ethics Committee

PA Physical Activity

SD Standard Deviation

WHO World Health Organisation

US United States