

Cardiorespiratory fitness of smoking vs. non-smoking university students

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Introduction: Tobacco smoke is enormously harmful to your health. Cigarettes contain up to 600 ingredients and when they burn, they produce more than 700 chemicals. Smoking damages your entire cardiovascular system and nicotine causes blood vessels to tighten, which restricts the flow of blood, called peripheral artery disease. Smoking lowers good cholesterol levels and raises blood pressure which can result in atherosclerosis. These biological and anatomical changes can have significant negative consequences in the fitness levels. The aim of this study was to test, analyze and compare the cardiorespiratory fitness of those university students who are smokers and non-smokers using a 12-minute walk/run test. For this study a comparative, cross-sectional research design was used.

Results: A total of thirty (30) students were selected for participation in this study. The participants were divided into 2 groups: smokers (n=15; aged 26.5 ± 10.3) non-smokers (n=15; aged 23 ± 2.27). VO_{2max} differed between the two groups (P 0.030). There was also a significant difference between the distances covered in both groups (P 0.029).

Conclusion: VO_{2max} and the distances covered were significantly higher in non-smokers compared to smokers. The study highlights the negative health and wellness consequences of cigarette smoking.

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