

Factors Influencing Exercise Participation Frequency Among UWRF Students

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Introduction

Previous research has shown that college students have low levels of exercise, in spite of its well documented benefits. In addition to meeting academic obligations students may have employment obligations and extracurricular student activities that consume much of their leisure time.

Purpose

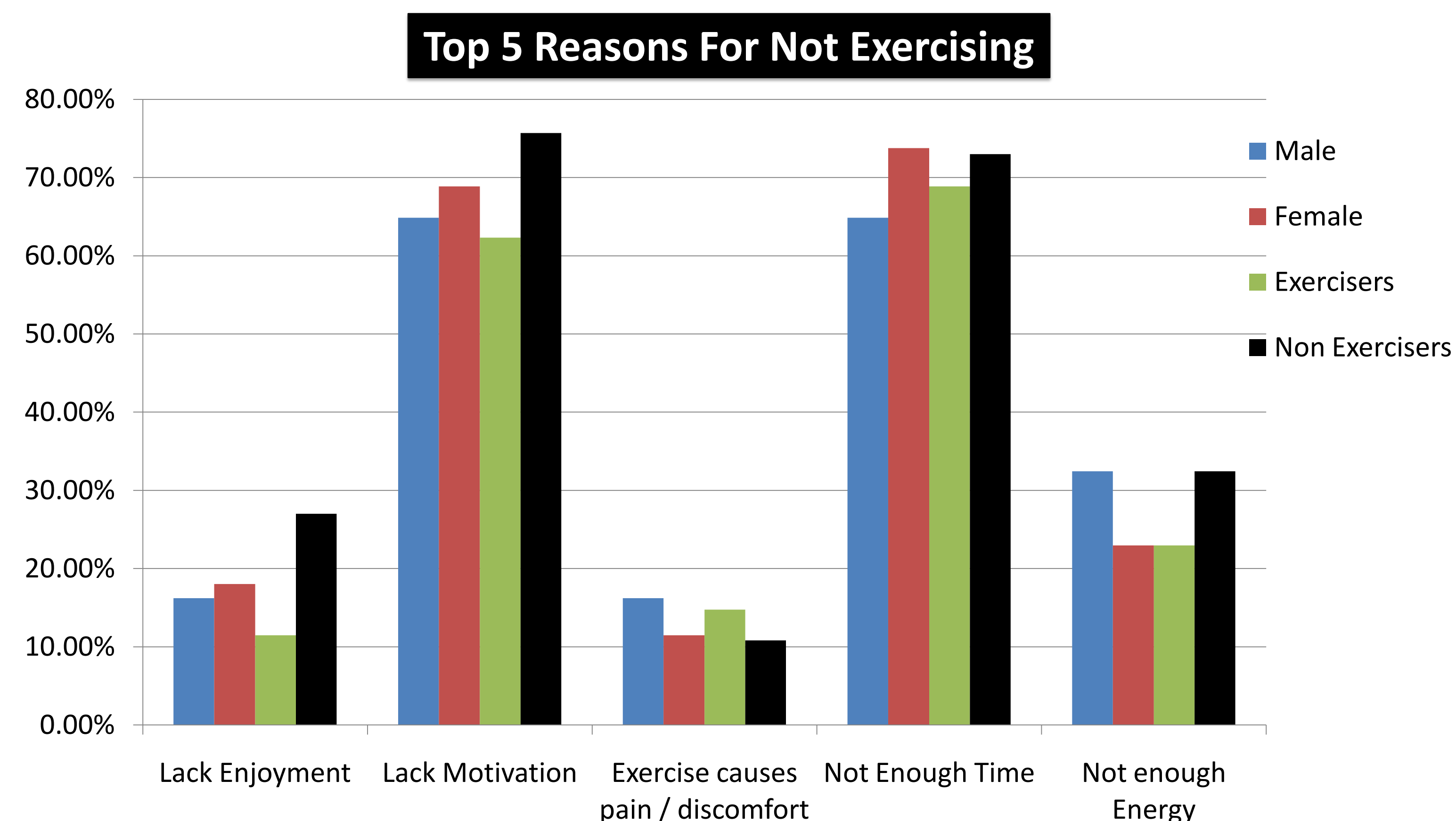
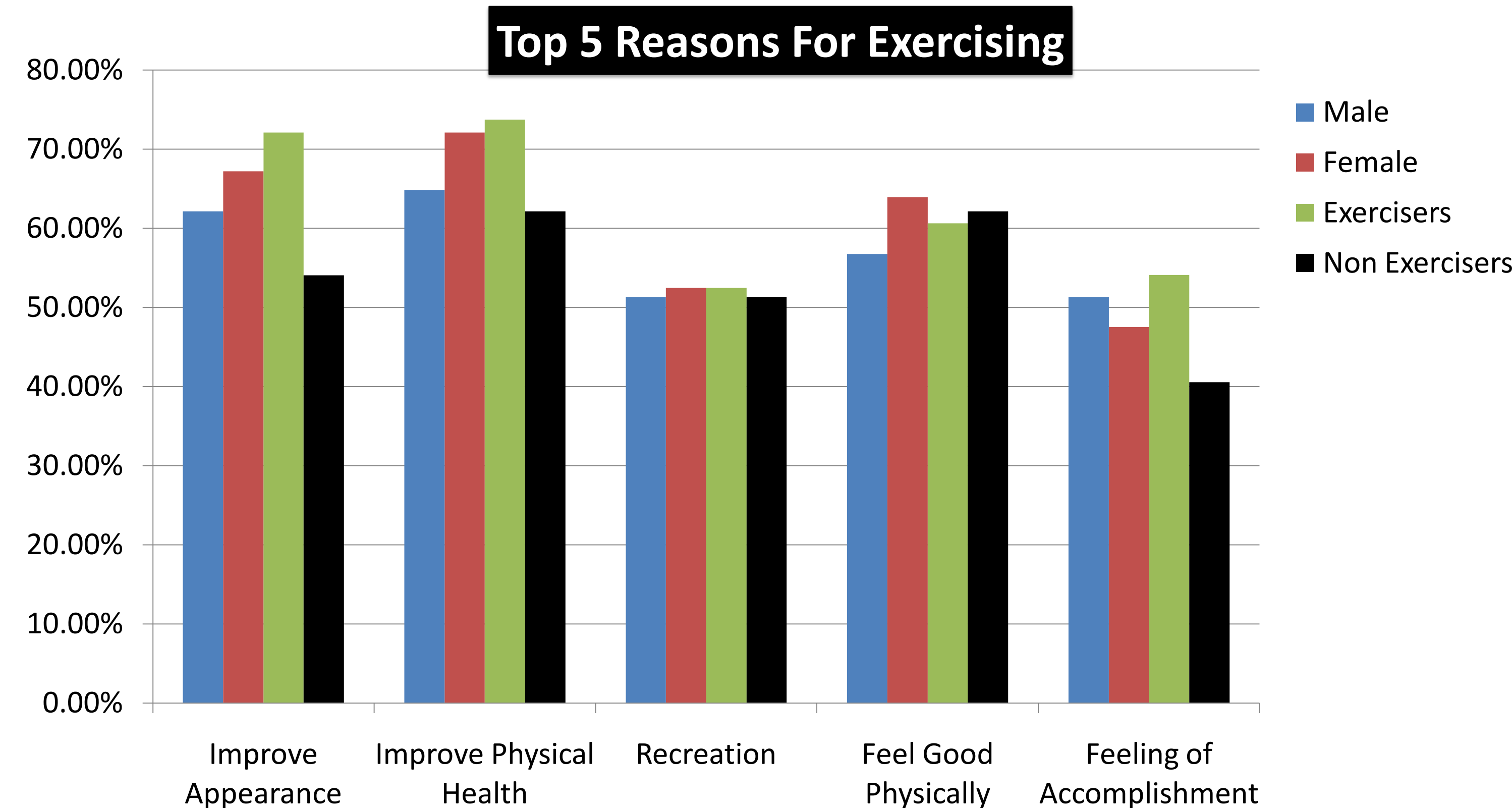
The goal of this study was to determine the reported reasons University of Wisconsin River Falls (UWRF) students give for choosing whether or not to participate in exercise, and if there is a relationship between their amount of leisure time, number of credits enrolled in, number of hours per week of employment and reported reasons for choosing to participate or not participate in exercise. This research is important because, the lack of regular exercise causes major health problems among Americans. The results of this study may be used to develop intervention programs that encourage exercise in the future.

Method

The method used was an anonymous survey of the UWRF general student population at the UWRF University Center. Students were randomly asked to complete a survey measuring: credits enrolled in, number of hours per week working for an employer, number of days per week participating in exercise, number of minutes per exercise session, level of exercise intensity, and reasons for or against exercise participation. Participants of this study were 98 randomly selected students enrolled at UWRF. Of the 98 participants, 62.3% (n = 61) were females and 37.7% (n = 37) were males. In terms of class levels, 19 (19.3%) freshmen, 25 (25.5%) sophomores, 28 (28.6%) juniors, and 26 (26.5%) were seniors.

Results

The results showed that there was no correlation between exercise participation frequency and number hours obligated to employment per week, or credit load. The top 5 reasons given for exercise participation were: improve or maintain physical health (69%), improve or maintain personal appearance (65%), feel good physically (61%), recreation (52%), and feeling of accomplishment (49%). The top 5 reasons given for not participating in exercise were: not enough time (70%), lack of motivation (67%), not enough energy (27%), lack of enjoyment (17%), and exercise creates physical pain or discomfort (13%). The MEAN for all respondents for exercise sessions was per week (M=3) and number of minutes per session (M=49). In terms of exercise frequency 62.2% of the respondents exercise 3 or more times (M=4) per week for at least 30 minutes (M=58). Mean credits taken for both Exercisers and Non Exercisers (M=15). Total hours per week employment obligation for Exercisers (M=11) and Non Exercisers (M=12).



Conclusion

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) recommends the following for exercise: moderately intense cardiovascular exercise 30 minutes a day, five days a week or vigorously intense cardiovascular exercise 20 minutes a day, 3 days a week and eight to 10 strength-training exercises, eight to 12 repetitions of each exercise twice a week. This study found that 62.2% of UWRF students surveyed met at least one aspect of these guidelines. Although both exercisers and non exercisers recognized the health benefits of exercise, both groups sighted lack of motivation and lack of time as barriers to exercise. Further research needs to be performed in this area in order to develop intervention programs that encourage exercise and development of a healthy lifestyle.