

INTRODUCTION

- Physical activity is one of the primary determinants of health and academic success in university and college students
- The balance between health, fitness, social life and academia is especially difficult for those in their first year of university who are facing adjustments as a result of moving away from home
- First year female students living away from home in Orchard Commons Residence at UBC are among the population of students facing major adjustments while transitioning from high school to university
- We designed a study to identify the barriers to physical activity among this population of female students and to gain insight into the effects that physical activity has on student's health and grades; trends were compared between students coming to UBC from inside the province to those who came from outside of the province in attempt to study the effects that a further move might have on students



<http://vancouver.housing.ubc.ca/residences/orchard-commons/>

METHODS

Inclusion criteria:

Those who were able to participate in the study were first year students attending UBC, identified as females and whose place of residence was Orchard Commons.

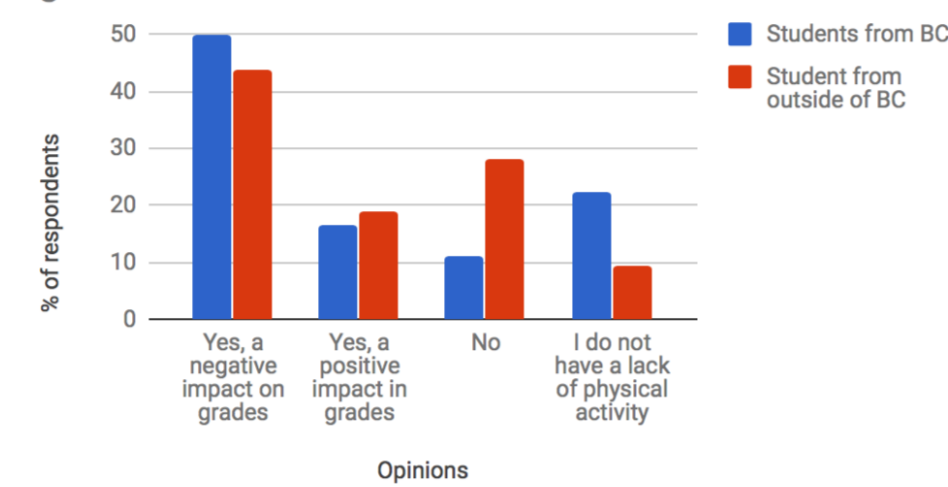


Survey:

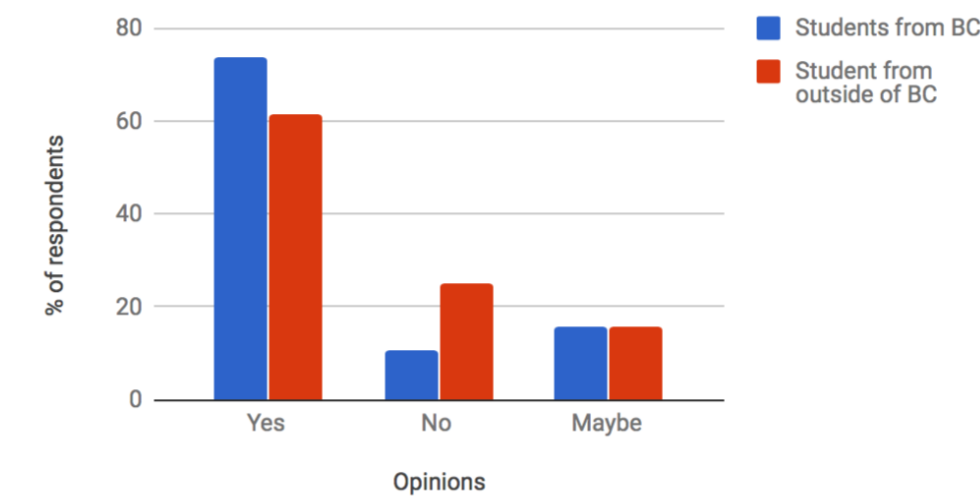
There was a total of 16 questions and 2 sub-questions. The questions in the survey looked at comparing activity levels in high school versus at UBC, in BC residents and non-BC residents and identifying the barriers these participants faced in participating in regular physical activity.

RESULTS

Does lack of physical activity have an impact on grades?

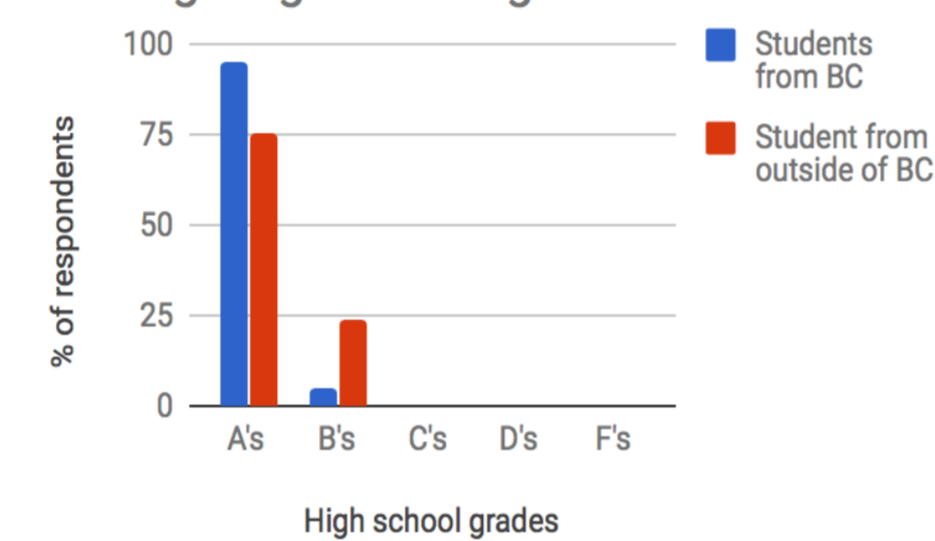


Has a lack of physical activity had a negative impact on your mental health?

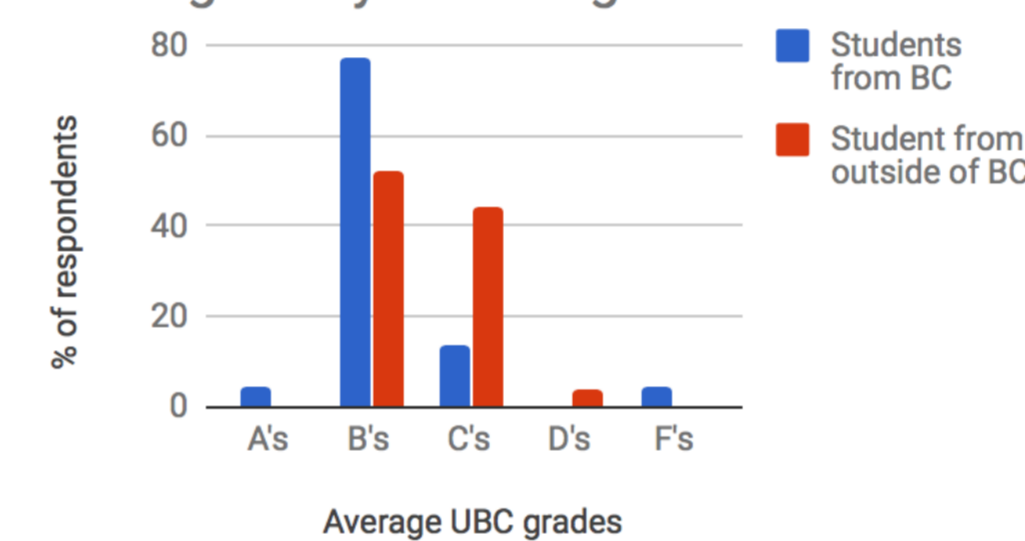


Majority of students from both inside and outside of BC experience a lack of physical activity to have a negative impact on their grades and health

Average high school grades

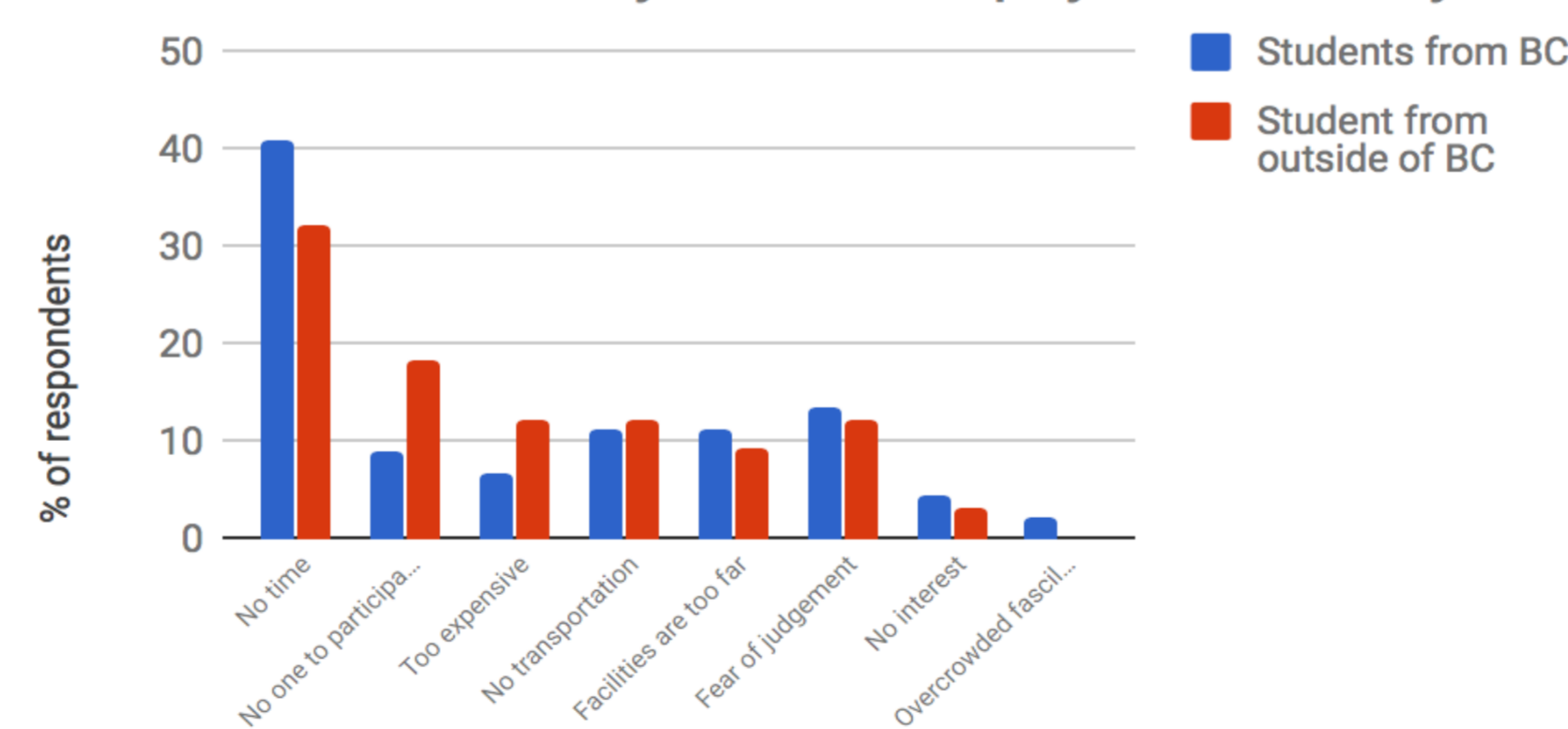


Average 1st year UBC grades



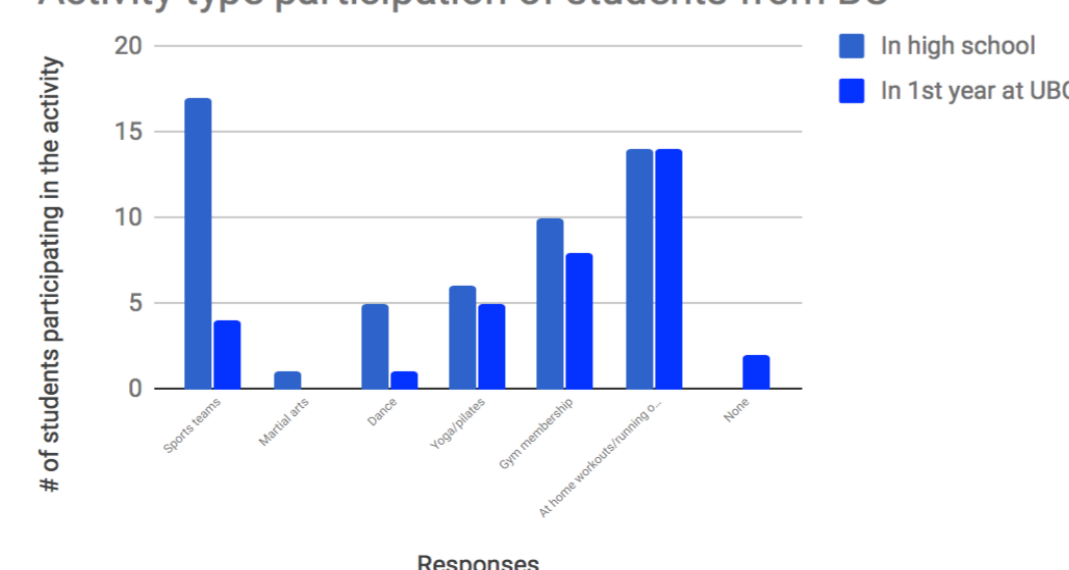
Majority of students from both inside and outside of BC experienced a letter grade drop from high school

What are barriers to your lack of physical activity?

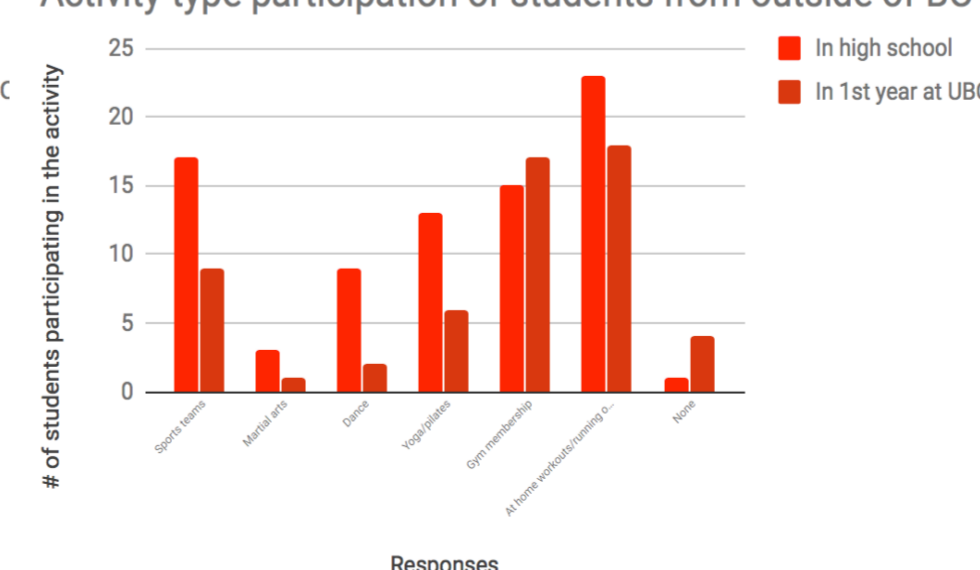


Opinions

Activity-type participation of students from BC



Activity-type participation of students from outside of BC



In both groups of students there was a decline in most activity-types that students reported participating in throughout high school

DISCUSSION

- Majority of students from both groups believed that a lack of physical activity negatively impacted their grades, as well as their mental health. Research has shown that being physically active has both academic benefits, as well as mental health benefits (Coe, Pivarnik, Womack, Reeves & Malina, 2006).
- The most reported barrier to physical activity from both groups was a lack of time. This time is often spent studying to improve academic achievement, which otherwise could have been spent being physically active (Deliens, Deforche, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Clarys, 2015). Educating students about the academic benefits of being physically active, and including it in their study routine could be a solution to overcoming this barrier.
- Non-BC residents reported 'no one to participate with' as a barrier twice as much as BC residents (18.5% to 9%). As people are more likely to participate in physical activity with friends, framing physical activity in a way that promotes meeting new people could potentially be a way to attract more individuals to participate (Schneider & Kummert, 2016).
- Out-of-province students reported higher rates of dance participation in high school, in addition to using the Aquatic Centre more frequently. This suggests the best way to reach the outside-of-BC students would be through aquatic and dance-based activities.
- Challenges and limitations of this study included having a small sample size, reliance on self reporting of grades and activity levels. Having individuals complete the survey anonymously and apart from peer groups could be implemented to eliminate some aspects of peer pressure.
- Future research should focus on ways to incorporate physical activity in students study routines, as well as overcoming the social isolation many out-of-province students face which can limit their physical activity participation (Deliens, Deforche, De Bourdeaudhuij, & Clarys, 2015; Wu, Garza & Guzman, 2015).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Short high intensity interval classes (HIIT);** helps overcome the most reported barrier of having no time.
- Classes in orchard commons block;** helps overcome time as a barrier and eliminates transport as a barrier.
- Residence based teams in intramural leagues;** helps alleviate the barrier of having no-one to participate with.
- Female only gyms;** helps reduce fear of judgement. Results also showed that a large percent of students would purchase a gym membership for a female only gym.