Abstract

Objective Presenting physical performance tests' (PPTs) descriptive reference values and prevalence according to gender and age-group regarding a representative sample of non-institutionalised older adults (aged 60 and over) living in Bridgetown (Barbados) and Havana (Cuba). Methods This was a cross-sectional, population-based household survey. In Bridgetown and Havana, respectively, 1,508 and 1,905 subjects were examined who had been selected by probabilistic sampling. PPTs included handgrip strength, standing balance, timed repeated "chair stand" and "pick up a pen." Results The results from Bridgetown and Havana showed that values (mean ± standard deviations and percentiles) for men were greater than women in handgrip strength and "chair stand" tests (p≤0.01). Increasing age led to both genders having reduced (p≤0.001) prevalence of people having better results for each test (based on chi-square). Men had proportionately better scores than women in the four tests. Conclusion The data suggested that younger people and men had better physical performance. Men and women in both countries had differences regarding the prevalence of people unable to perform the tests and better test results, according to the test and age-group. The data provided information about the range of performance that can be expected from people in different ages and helped understand usual rates of change in age-groups.

Keywords

Aging, cross-sectional study, hand strength, time and motion study.