Effects of Lifestyle on Muscle Strength in a Healthy Danish Population

Background: Life style is expected to influence muscle strength. This study aimed at assessing a possible relationship between smoking, alcohol intake and physical activity, and muscle strength in a healthy Danish population aged 20-79 years. Population study based on data collected from The Copenhagen City Heart Study (CCHS) and measurements of isokinetic muscle strength from a sub-study of randomly selected healthy participants from CCHS.

Methods: 126 women and 63 men were studied. All participants completed a questionnaire regarding their lifestyle, including physical activity, alcohol intake and smoking habits. Isokinetic muscle strength was measured over the upper extremities (UE), trunk, and lower extremities (LE). Multivariate analyses including all of the variables were carried out.

Results: The level of daily physical activity during leisure was positively correlated to muscle strength in the lower extremities (p = 0.03) for women, and lower extremities (p = 0.03) and trunk (p = 0.007) for men. Alcohol Intake was in general not correlated to muscle strength. No clear effect of smoking was seen on muscle strength. Conclusions: Our results show that physical activity during leisure is associated with a positive effect on muscle strength in both sexes. When keeping alcohol intake within the recommended limits, alcohol does not seem to affect muscle strength negatively. No effect of smoking on muscle strength was found in our group of healthy subjects. The findings are of importance when considering recommendation on life style when wishing to keep fit with age to be able to carry out daily activities.