

BENNER, EDIE K., Ph.D., December 2005

HEALTH EDUCATION AND
HEALTH PROMOTION

THE THEORY OF PLANNED BEHAVIOR AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG
PHYSICAL THERAPISTS (232 PP.)

Co-Directors of Dissertation: Cynthia Wolford Symons, D.Ed.
Theresa Jean Byrne, Ph.D.

The current study used the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework for assessing physical activity among physical therapists.

The sample consisted of 343 male and female physical therapist members of the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA). A total of 1,000 randomly selected members of the APTA were sent the instruments.

The purposes of this study were: (a) to determine which constructs of the Theory of Planned Behavior discriminate between physically active physical therapists and non-physically active physical therapists; (b) to determine which social norm constructs were different between physically active physical therapists and non-physically active physical therapists; and (c) to analyze the extent to which physically active physical therapists and non-physically active physical therapists were different on specified demographics.

There were 188 (55.9%) respondents classified into the physically active category and 149 (44.1%) respondents that did not meet the weekly recommended guidelines for moderate or vigorous physical activity.

Discriminant function analyses were performed separately for the Theory of Planned Behavior constructs, social norms about physical activity of other physical therapists, and specified demographics. A subsequent discriminant function analysis was

conducted on the significant independent variables from the previous analyses. The results indicated that attitude toward physical activity, social norms for moderate physical activity, and number of dependent children living in the household at least 50% of the time were the best discriminators of physical activity behavior among physical therapists.

There were 10 hypotheses analyzed in this study. In addition to statistically significant findings, three were not supported. The findings do support the Theory of Planned Behavior as a valuable framework for understanding physical activity behavior among physical therapist members of the American Physical Therapy Association.