

# **Metabolic equivalents (mets) of the physical activity patterns of the elderly kenyans in homes for the aged in Nairobi province**

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Gerontologists have stressed the fundamental role played by physical activity in ameliorating the functional fitness of the elderly masses. A fitness testing method that is used to assign values to this functional fitness of the elderly, estimates the caloric expenditure or intensity of the various physical activities of the elderly. The unit of measurement used for this purpose is called a Metabolic Equivalent (MET). This paper focuses on METs of the physical activities of the elderly in the homes for the aged in Nairobi Province. All of the 150 male and female elderly > 60 years residing in the three homes for the aged, registered and affiliated to HelpAge Kenya in Nairobi Province were used in the study. The design employed a semi-structured interview where a Physical Activity Log Book was employed to record MET intensities of physical activities. The accrued data on METs were subjected to statistical analysis using Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The data were presented in tables and pie-charts. The finding of the study was: There were significant differences between METs of past ( $6.5 \pm 0.8$  METs) and present ( $1.8 \pm 0.9$  METs) physical activities of the elderly in the homes for the aged in Nairobi Province. The study recommended that there is an imperative need for: development of more trained gerontological professionals in exercise and recreational programs of the elderly; diversification of physical activity and recreational programs of the elderly in homes for the aged, and regular fitness testing and evaluation for the elderly residents to know their progression in attainment of fitness goals.