

Title

Physical activity and well-being among adolescents – A public health perspective

Type

Oral presentation (jeg vil gerne presentere min forskning mundligt, enten på dansk eller på engelsk)

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ABSTRACT**Background**

Physical activity (PA) among adolescents is diminishing and worldwide only about 20% of 13–15-year-old adolescents meet the public health guidelines of minimum 60 minutes of daily PA of at least moderate intensity. This decline has serious consequences as lack of PA adversely affects physical and mental health. As PA patterns develop during childhood / adolescence and are tracked into adulthood, diminished PA during adolescence can negatively influence health and well-being later in life. The overall aim of this research was to examine PA and well-being among adolescents with special emphasis on depressive symptoms and quality of sleep.

Methods

First, population-based data from Iceland were used to examine differences in age-related PA and depressive symptoms. Second, in a pilot-study, the effects of a pedometer- and diary-based intervention were tested. Finally, in a randomized controlled trial (RCT) the effectiveness of using pedometers, diaries or combination of both in a PA intervention was tested.

Results

PA decreased from the age of 15 and depressive symptoms increased during the age from 10 to 19 in Icelandic adolescents. Gender differences were apparent with girls being less active and having higher levels of depressive symptoms than boys. The pilot-study intervention was effective in increasing PA and improving subjective sleep quality among 15–16-year-old adolescents. The RCT demonstrated further the effectiveness of the intervention with pedometers alone being effective in increasing PA.

Discussion

The most prominent differences in both PA and depressive symptoms occur among Icelandic adolescents between ages 15 and 16 or around the transition from compulsory to upper-secondary school. The intervention studies showed promising results as immediately following a 3-weeks PA intervention adolescents with pedometers took significantly more daily steps compared to their peers in the control group. Additionally, the intervention was effective in enhancing subjective sleep quality and adolescents that were more physically active fell asleep faster than their less active peers.

Implications

Brief PA interventions based on pedometers were effective in increasing daily steps and improving sleep quality among adolescents. This has important public health relevance as the intervention is cost-effective and can easily be disseminated and incorporated into schools' curricula.

Nøglereferencer

Baldursdottir, B. 2016. *Physical activity and well-being among adolescents. A public health perspective*. (Doctoral dissertation). Sahlgrenska Academy, Institute of Medicine. University of Gothenburg. ISBN: 978-91-628-9861-8 (e-pub). <http://hdl.handle.net/2077/42340>

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