

A street sports peer-to-peer intervention involving youth: introducing the ASPHALT project

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Abstract

The ASPHALT project (Activities and Street sports Promoting Healthy, Active Living and Thriving youth) is a research and intervention project which brings together a street sports organisation, GAME, and a research institution, Health Promotion Research, Steno Diabetes Center Copenhagen. The purpose is to increase physical activity, social relations, well-being, and empowerment of children and youth living in marginalised neighbourhoods through a peer-to-peer street sports intervention. GAME currently has ongoing activities in more than 20 marginalised neighbourhoods in Denmark, conducted by volunteer peer leaders, called "Playmakers", age 16-25. However, GAME has identified a need for improving the education and support of Playmakers. From a research perspective, peer-to-peer approaches have proved effective in reaching disadvantaged groups within health care settings (Ahlmark et al. 2016); however, knowledge gaps exist related to the engagement of youth as peer leaders in sports, their contribution and education (Nicholls 2009). Therefore, the research explores how a peer-to-peer educational programme can support young peer leaders in delivering an inclusive street sport intervention in marginalised neighbourhoods.

The methodological framework is the Medical Research Council guidelines for developing and evaluating complex interventions (Craig et al. 2008). The project is in the first phase of development and guided by the theoretical framework of design-based research (Anderson & Shattuck 2012). Methods include a systematic literature review, three focus group discussions with Playmakers and six observations of peer-led GAME activities in marginalised neighbourhoods.

The presentation will introduce ASPHALT and provide insights from the mapping phase of the project. This includes an overview of the state-of-the-art of peer-to-peer interventions involving youth, and some preliminary findings from the fieldwork mapping current practices and perspectives of Playmakers. The results will inform the subsequent intervention development in which an improved educational concept for peer leaders will be developed, pilot tested and evaluated. The results should, further, be of interest to practitioners, researchers and policy makers with an interest in peer-to-peer approaches involving youth.

References

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