Measuring what matters: a core outcome set for school-based physical activity interventions

Bina Ram,1 Kim Foley,1 Esther van Sluijs,2 Dougal Hargreaves,1,3 Russell Viner,4 Sonia Saxena 1

About the research

• Many studies evaluate the impact of school-based physical activity interventions on children's health.
• Different studies measure different outcomes relevant to specific audiences only.
• Variations in the outcomes measured across studies limits the process of bringing together information from a range of sources and disciplines to inform debates and decisions on specific issues (evidence synthesis).
• Research needs to focus on measuring the outcomes that are considered the most important by key groups who would benefit from a better understanding of the impact of school-based physical activity interventions on children's health.
• A core outcome set would help to standardise the outcomes to be measured during research on school based physical activity interventions.

What we did

• Using input from five key stakeholder groups (health researchers, public health professionals, parents, teachers and children) we identified a core outcome set.

Policy implications

• UK Government policies promote school-based physical activity interventions.
• This core outcome set can be used to:
  ❖ improve the evidence base for school-based physical activity interventions on children's health as it will allow evidence synthesis.
  ❖ better promote successful interventions as they talk to the priorities of key stakeholder groups such as teachers, parents and children
  ❖ this will help with the uptake of physical activity interventions by schools.

1Imperial College London (ICL), 2Cambridge University, 3Mohn Centre, ICL, 4University College London
Key findings

participants rated 50 outcomes under 3 domains in a 2-round Delphi survey → 13 outcomes rated ‘critically’ important to measure

children participated in the workshop → 8 outcomes considered important

Consensus meeting: 14 outcomes agreed to be included

CORE OUTCOME SET

Physical Activity & Health
- Diet (varied & balanced)
- Energy
- Fitness
- Intensity of physical activity
- Sleep (hours)

Social and Emotional Health
- Anxiety
- Self-esteem
- Depression
- Stress
- Enjoyment
- Wellbeing
- Happiness

Educational performance
- Concentration
- Focus

Further information
More information can be found at:
https://nihrsphr.link/OutcomesPhysicalActivityPrimarySchool
Developing a core outcome set... BMJ Open. 2022.

About the School
The NIHR SPHR is a partnership between the Universities of Sheffield; Bristol; Cambridge; Imperial; and University College London; The London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM); LiLaC – a collaboration between the Universities of Liverpool and Lancaster; and Fuse - The Centre for Translational Research in Public Health a collaboration between Newcastle, Durham, Northumbria, Sunderland and Teesside Universities.

Contact
Dr Bina Ram
Email: b.ram@imperial.ac.uk
Twitter: @DrBinaRam

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