

ARTICLE REVIEWED

Adolescents' Physical Activity Levels on Physical Education and Non-Physical Education Days According to Gender, Age and Weight Status

Viciano, J., Mayorga-Vega, D., & Parra-Saldías, M. (2019). Adolescents' physical activity levels on physical education and non-physical education days according to gender, age, and weight status. *European Physical Education Review*, 25(1), 143-155.

THE PROBLEM:

The population in Chile has shown remarkably low levels of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). It is well-known that the global population does not do a good job of participating in 60 minutes or more of daily MVPA. Studies have shown that students enrolled at the middle and high school level are in great danger of gaining unwarranted weight, due to the decrease in MVPA at that age.

Schools have been considered viable platforms for physical activity participation and promotion to occur. Research has suggested that students are more active on physical education days than they are on non-physical education days and the weekends. This finding suggests that physical education is a major contributor to school-aged youth achieving the daily recommendation of 60 minutes or more of MVPA.



Research Summary:

A total of 123 Chilean secondary school students participated in this study. The mean age of participants was around 13 years old. Both males (87 boys) and females (69 girls) were included in this study. Physical activity levels were measured using a GT3X accelerometer. Participants were instructed to wear their pedometer for seven days straight, from sunup to sundown (except for when engaging in aquatic activities). Weight status was collected by calculating the participants Body Mass Index (BMI). Participants were either classified as overweight/obese or non-overweight. Physical education lessons remained the same, as there was no intervention.

Conclusion:

The entire sample demonstrated statistically significant greater values of MVPA on physical education days. It was also discovered that participants had significantly greater values of Metabolic Equivalents (METs) on physical education days, when compared to non-physical education days. As it related to gender, males participated in more MVPA on physical education days compared to females. Males were also more active on physical education days than they were on non-physical education days. Lastly, adolescents that were older experienced statistically significant MVPA levels on physical education days.

Key Takeaway:

The results of this study are important to consider, as they advocate for physical education in schools and the contribution to the daily recommendation of 60 minutes or more of MVPA per day. Increasing the number of physical education visits per week will not take place at the campus level. Rather, advocacy is encouraged at the state level. The more physical educators are able to advocate for daily physical education using research to prove that physical education can increase student MVPA levels, the more likely this change will occur. By sharing the findings of this study, physical educators are better able to justify their hard-working efforts.



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [Legislative Action Center](#) – Advocacy tools for health and physical educators