

Physical Activity among Adolescents in a Swedish Multicultural Area

An Empowerment-Based Health Promotion School Intervention

The overarching aim of the present thesis was two-fold. The first aim was to describe and critically reflect upon the experiences of developing and implementing an empowerment-based school intervention, focusing on food and physical activity, involving adolescents from a Swedish multicultural area characterized by low socioeconomic status. The second aim was to investigate accelerometer-measured sedentary time and physical activity among the adolescents, and to evaluate the effects of the intervention on these variables.

The two-year intervention was continually developed and implemented, as a result of cooperation and shared decision making among researchers and the participating adolescents. Data was collected in seventh, eighth and ninth grade using documentation and observation protocols, accelerometers, and questionnaires.

This thesis shows the importance of acquiring a broad and deep understanding of the targeted context and the participants of the intervention, and to be open-minded when it comes to negotiating, adjusting, and reorganizing empowerment-based interventions. This thesis further shows that the participating girls accumulated more sedentary time and less moderate-to-vigorous physical activity than boys, and that approximately half of the adolescents met the physical activity recommendations. The intervention had no positive effects on sedentary time and moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Finally, this thesis shows that cautiousness is warranted when cross-comparing accelerometer-based studies with different epoch durations and cut-points.



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