

An empowerment-based school physical activity intervention with adolescents in a disadvantaged community

A transformative mixed methods investigation

This thesis is based on a two-year empowerment-based school physical activity intervention, in a Swedish multicultural community of low socioeconomic status. Results from focus group interviews showed that the adolescents physical activity engagement is multifaceted, and influenced by a variety of factors at and individual level (e.g., gender and motivation), social level (e.g., family and friends), environmental level (e.g., sports grounds and school), and societal level (e.g., policies and gender norms). The importance of spontaneous physical activity and the magnitude of screen-based activities as undermining their physical activity appears to be specific to these adolescents.

The two-year empowerment-based intervention was continuously developed and implemented through cooperation and shared decision making between the researchers and the adolescents. The researchers experienced that the adolescents were curious about that intervention activities, they had numerous suggestions for intervention activities, and they mainly appeared to appreciate practical activities, rather than sedentary ones. During the course of the intervention, however, the researchers faced a number of challenges that complicated the intentions of supporting the adolescents' participation and empowerment.

During the two-year intervention, there was a credible decrease in the adolescents' motivation and accelerometer-measured moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, and there was no credible intervention effects on any of these variables. Future school-based physical activity interventions, in multicultural areas of low socioeconomic status, is recommended to include multidimensional intervention approaches across contexts.



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