

Active Living Research

Using Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity
and Create Active Communities

ARTICLE SUMMARY

February 2013

What Promotes Physical Activity among African-American Youth?

Introduction

African-American adolescents are more at risk for obesity and physical inactivity than their White peers. We explored the multiple factors – individual, family, home and neighborhood - related to physical activity among African-American adolescents aged 12 to 16 years in Birmingham, Ala.

Key Findings

Boys were three times more likely than girls to achieve the recommended daily amount of 60 minutes/day of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). Among boys, self-efficacy for physical activity (i.e. confidence to be active in spite of common barriers, e.g. weather) was related to more MVPA. Among girls, family support (e.g. parents encouraging daughters to be active) was related to more MVPA.

Methods

We collected questionnaire data from 116 African-American adolescents and their parents on variables related to physical activity. Questions asked about demographic characteristics, adolescents' self-efficacy, family support, and home and neighborhood environments (e.g. availability and accessibility of TVs and computers in the home; perceptions of neighborhood safety).

Other Findings

There was no link between parent education level or parent marital status and physical activity. We also did not find that concerns about neighborhood safety and/or crime were related to physical activity.

Implications

This study sheds light on the multi-level influences on African-American adolescents' physical activity. The findings can help shape programs to increase physical activity among youth of color, especially those residing in the South, where obesity rates are some of the highest in the nation.

SOURCE

Baskin, M.L., et al. (2013). Predictors of Moderate-to-Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) in African American Young Adolescents. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 45(1Suppl): S142-S150.

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