A Review of the Effects of Specialist Physical Activity on the Psychological Health and Physical Activity of Children

Literature Review: Plan

[General introduction]

- Sedentary lifestyle
- Physical activities link to physical and psychological health

Relationship between physical activity and mental health

- Relationship in adults is well supported
- Little evidence in children
  - Inconsistencies in previous research on children—attributed to methodological and measurement difficulties rather than no relationship.
  - But if relationship can be consistently demonstrated, physical activity may be a useful tool in enhancing children’s mental health. (Trouble in the past determining direction of relationship).
- Discuss decline in children’s mental health and rates of mental health in Australian children
  - 1 in 15 children will develop a mental illness (AIHW)
  - Highlights the relevance and importance of addressing the issue.
- Discuss research that supports physical activity for improving mental health in children.
  - Reference: Parfitt & Eston, 2005; Lagerberg, 2005; Calfas & Taylor, 1994; Biddle, Fox & Boucher, 2002; Cale & Harris, 2005
  - Self esteem and exercise??
  - Previous research shows physical activities effect on:
    - Body Image - (Hausenblas & Fallon, 2006; Taveras, Rifas-Shiman, Field et al., 2004; Gehrman, 2003; Monaci and Nuvoli, 2002; McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2003)
    - Stress - (Norlander, Moas and Archer, 2005; Annesi, 2004; Bykov, 2001; Uechi, Takenaka and Oka, 2000).
    - Depression – (Tomson, Pangrazi, Friedman & Hutchison, 2003; McCabe and Marwit, 1994) James – I’m still yet to decide whether to put this section here or further down. I’m having trouble fitting it in context down the page.
If Physical activity is a mechanism for improving mental health, we need to look for opportunities for children to be physically active.
  - Introduce the idea of the school and physical education classes to implement programs.
  - Limited research has focused on the use of school physical education as a tool for improving mental health.
  - Previous interventions have focused on improving physical activity levels but haven’t addresses or assessed psychological variables.

**School physical education/ Specialist teacher**

- Argument for physical education as a targeted setting for mental health intervention and improving physical activity levels.
  - Many studies have focused on PE intervention to increase Physical activity levels but none have looked at PE to improve psychological variables/mental health.
  - Reference: Fairclough & Stratton, 2006; Ridgers, Stratton & Fairclough, 2006; McKenzie et. al., 2004; Trudeau & Shepard, 2005.
  - School physical education provides an opportunity for structured physical activity participation that is available to most young people. (Cale & Harris, 2005)

- Current school guidelines
  - 120 minutes of physical education per week, set down by the ACT Department of Education.
  - Growing concern that teachers are not reaching guidelines
  - Trouble fitting in curriculum even though previous research demonstrates it benefits (Faucett, Nugent, Sallis & McKenzie, 1997).

- Are existing PE practices sufficient enough in terms of improving psychological variables (body image, depression, stress)/mental health and improving levels of physical activity?
- Whether its worthwhile using specialist staff
  - Previous research shows specialist PE teacher provides better quality and quantity time in PA. (McKenzie, Sallis, Koldy & Faucette, 1997; Faucette, McKenzie & Patterson, 1990)
  - Classroom teachers are typically untrained to conduct quality lessons (McKenzie, Sallis, Koldy & Faucette, 1997)

- If previous research indicates the benefits of a specialist teacher, what are the processes and methods of change / what do they do differently—leading into next topic what has worked in the past?

**Intervention/theory behind intervention – Processes and methods for change**

- Previous interventions: What works? What are the processes and methods that work in a program?
  - Modelling?
  - Learning atmosphere?
Lesson content - Programs oriented towards skill development/designed to increase competence rather than success/failure. – win/lose.

Other school-based mental health interventions - MindMatters (Waring & Hazell, 2002). James – I wasn’t going to included this as I thought I might be going over the word limit and wasn’t sure how relevant non-physical education mental health interventions would be.

Little if any previous research has focused on using physical activity interventions with the inclusion of mental health aims and objectives.

**Conclusion**

1. Physical activity contributes to mental health, but there is a need for work on providing more specialised PE which can maximise PE’s potential mental health benefits.

2. There is a need to research to compare, for example, current primary school physical activity practices to programs run by physical education experts, to determine whether a specialist program is worth the effort.

3. There is also a need to better understand which specialist program processes are most salient in terms of the any positive changes may transpire.
References


**References to be added**

Hausenblas & Fallon, (2006); Taveras, Rifas-Shiman, Field et al., 2004; Gehrman, 2003; Monaci and Nuvoli, 2002; McCabe and Ricciardelli, 2003)