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Relationships between objectively measured physical activity, movement competency and psychosocial outcomes in overweight and obese children

This study examined cross-sectional associations between physical activity and the psychosocial outcomes of self-esteem and health related quality of life (HRQoL), and fundamental movement skills (FMS) and psychosocial outcomes in overweight/obese children. Measures were collected from 165 overweight/obese children aged 5-9y (mean age = 8.2 ± 1.1 ; mean BMI-z = 2.81 ± 0.71 , 41% boys) as part of the Hunter and Illawarra Kids Challenge Using Parent Support (HIKCUPS) RCT. Baseline data, split by gender, were used to explore relationships between activity/FMS variables and psychosocial outcomes for boys and girls separately. Measures included objectively measured physical activity (Actigraph 7164 accelerometer), video-assessed FMS (locomotor/object-control skills), self-esteem (athletic, social, scholastic, behavioural, physical appearance, global self-worth) and child- and parent-reported HRQoL. FMS were related to psychosocial outcomes though physical activity generally was not. When sub-domains of FMS were examined, locomotor skills were the stronger correlate of psychosocial outcomes in boys but object-control skills were the stronger correlate in girls. In girls, overall motor skills related to perceived physical appearance ($r=0.29$, $p= 0.04$) and object-control skills related to global self-worth ($r=0.42$, $p= 0.002$). Locomotor ($r=0.36$, $p= 0.003$) and object-control skills ($r=0.33$, $p= 0.007$) related to perceived athletic competence in boys. Cross-sectionally, movement competency appears to be related to psychosocial outcomes in overweight/obese children, though relationships differ by gender and movement skill sub-domain. Findings indicate the potential of targeting movement competency to promote improved psychosocial health in overweight and obese children, which warrants further experimental investigation. * HIKCUPS is funded by the NHMRC (354101).