The things kids do: Exploring relations among occupations, weight, stress, and health

Assessment Tools

- An adapted version of the Paediatric Activity Card Sort (PACS) was used to obtain information about activity level of the children. (Mandich, Polatajko, Miller & Baum, 2004). The adapted version of the PACS is a self-report card sorting scale which focuses on 90 possible activities.

- Activity frequency was measured in which the participant stated whether their participation in the activity was on a daily, weekly, monthly, or yearly basis.

- There were four occupation categories including: self-care, school/productivity, hobbies/social activities, and sports.

- A perceived stress scale for children (PSS-C) was used as a measure to gather data about the participant's perceived stress level. It is a 14-question survey that is easy for small children to comprehend. Scoring was done on a 0-3 point scale with some items reverse scored. This tool was developed for the larger study of stress, health, and behavior in children.

Results

- Perceptions of stress and health were negatively correlated: Spearman's $\rho = .311, p < .014$. As stress perceptions increased, health perceptions decreased.

- Total sports participation and weight were negatively correlated: Spearman's $\rho = -.355, p < .005$. As sports participation increased, weight decreased.

- Total exercise and weight were negatively correlated: Spearman's $\rho = -.342, p < .007$. As the amount of exercise increased, weight decreased.

- Total sports participation and frequency of illness other than a cold (within the month before study) were negatively correlated: Spearman's $\rho = -.339, p < .008$. As sports participation increased, frequency of illness decreased.

Conclusions

- The results support that participation in physical activity and sports occupations is related to optimal weight and health.

- Lower stress perception was also found to be related to better overall health.

- Being occupationally engaged in sports or high-impact activity appears to promote optimal health, stress levels, and weight.

- In the future, these findings have the potential to inform intervention planning, as well as shape community occupational therapy practice in programs for obesity prevention and weight management.

Limitations

- In the future, it may be more beneficial to ask for the weight on the health questionnaire in order to gather data simultaneously. The sample represents a small group of well-resourced children with minimal diversity.

References:


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