

Can a before-school physical activity program decrease bullying victimization in disadvantaged children? The Active-Start Study [¿Puede un programa de actividad física antes de la escuela disminuir la victimización por bullying en niños desfavorecidos? Estudio Active-Start]

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Background/Objective: To test the effectiveness of an 8-week before-school physical activity program to reduce bullying victimization among a group of socially disadvantaged children in the Active-Start study. **Method:** A non-blinded randomized controlled trial was conducted in three public schools classified as highly vulnerable and located in a deprived area of Santiago (Chile). A total of 5 classes participated, totaling 170 fourth grade children. The intervention was delivered before starting the first school-class (8:00-8:30 a.m.). The program lasted for 8 weeks. Primary outcome measurement on bullying victimization was assessed by the CUBE questionnaire at baseline and post-intervention. **Results:** There was a statistically significant reduction in the probability of suffering physical bullying (OR= 0.18, 95% CI, 0.04-0.82; p= .027) and verbal bullying (OR=0.13, 95% CI, 0.02-0.97; p= .046) after the 8-week program. **Conclusions:** Participation in an 8-week before-school physical activity intervention implemented in schools located in a disadvantaged district in Santiago (Chile) resulted in lower levels of bullying victimization among study participants. The Active-Start program may be a feasible and potentially scalable intervention option to improve the climate and pro-sociality environment at schools. © 2019

Experimental study

Physical exercise

School health

Student behaviour

Traditional bullying