

Teachers' perceptions of barriers and facilitators of the school environment for physical activity in schoolchildren: a qualitative study

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Abstract

A qualitative study based on grounded theory was carried out to analyse the facilitators and barriers of the school environment for physical activity (PA) perceived by teachers at schools in Cuenca and Ciudad Real (Castilla La Mancha-Spain). The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. Three themes were identified, 1) facilitators and 2) barriers to PA and 3) initiatives to promote PA among school children. Facilitators were teachers' positive attitudes, the benefits attributed to their practice, teachers' support for the activities and being specialised in physical education, considering the school as a good place to promote physical activity, facilitating elements of the curriculum and the built environment, support from the management team and organised breaks. Barriers were teachers who fail to support activities, reasons for not doing movement activities in class, devaluation of physical education, differences of opinion among teachers on the amount of physical education to be done, hindering factors in the curriculum, the built environment and classroom organisation, and unfavourable weather conditions. Raising awareness of the importance of PA, increasing the number of physical education and psychomotor skills sessions, training teachers in the use of active methodologies and organising reduced-cost or free extracurricular activities are essential steps to promote PA among schoolchildren in the school environment. It is important that the initiatives established to promote PA not only focus on establishing programmes that aim to increase the practice of PA among schoolchildren, but also to overcome barriers in the school environment, so that greater importance is given to the school elements that facilitate PA. © 2022 Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.

Author keywords

attitude; interviews; perceptions; Physical activity; qualitative research; schoolchild; schoolteachers