

Relationship Among Body Image, Self-esteem and Physical Activity in Fifth and Sixth Graders in an Elementary School in Taipei

Pi-Hsia Lee¹ Ching-Min Chen¹

Abstract

The correlation between exercise and psychological health recently has received considerable attention. This study examined the relationships among body image, self-esteem and physical activity. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather data from 972 fifth and sixth grade elementary school students (response rate: 97.3%). Results indicated that mean body image, esteem and physical activity were 45.79 ± 7.70 (60 in total), 33.33 ± 5.98 (40 in total) and 52.02 ± 3.95 (56 in total), respectively. Girls had more negative perceptions of body image and self-esteem than boys, and also performed less physical activity. Significantly positive correlations were found between body image and self-esteem ($r = .46, p < .001$) and physical activity ($r = .27, p < .001$). Self-esteem was also positively correlated with physical activity ($r = .21, p < .001$). The findings of this work indicate that promoting physical activity may offer an effective way of enhancing the self-esteem of elementary school students and promoting a healthy body image.

Key words: Body image, self-esteem, physical activity, elementary school

¹ Associate Professor, Taipei Medical University College of Nursing.

Received: Jun. 6, 2004 Revised: Oct. 10, 2004 Accepted: Oct. 14, 2004

Address Correspondence to: Ching-Min Chen No. 250, Wu-Hsing Street, Taipei, Taiwan, ROC