Physical Activity and Teenage Health (PATH)

TARGET AUDIENCE

This program is for adolescents.

SUMMARY

Physical Activity and Teenage Health (PATH) is a school-based program that seeks to reduce cardiovascular disease risk factors in participants by providing a series of physical education classes and information on heart health.

EVIDENCE

Two randomized controlled trials (RCT) and a pretest posttest study have been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the PATH program. In the pretest posttest study, participants had significant improvements in their cholesterol, VO2 max, knowledge of heart health, and dietary habits (i.e., in girls only) after 11 weeks in the program. In one RCT, 12th grade students in New York City public schools were randomly assigned to participate in the PATH program or to a control group. After 11 weeks, this study found students in the intervention group had significantly greater increases in cardiovascular health knowledge than control participants. Other significant outcomes were found only in girls such that girls significantly improved their dietary behaviors, cardiovascular fitness, and cholesterol compared to girls in the control group. Results from this study may suggest that the PATH program impacts girls differently than boys. Finally, the second RCT was conducted only in adolescent girls in New York City with girls either receiving the PATH program or their regular physical education classes. Results indicated that after 12 weeks of the program, the intervention group experienced significant, positive changes for body fat percentage, blood pressure, heart health knowledge, and eating breakfast compared to girls in the control group. No significant differences between groups were found for measures of body mass index, maximum oxygen uptake, self-perception of health, non-school related physical activity, and dietary habits.

COMPONENTS

The PATH program replaces the curriculum typically implemented in regular physical education (PE) classes. Each session begins with a lecture and discussion about various health topics, and students are assigned an associated homework activity to reinforce themes. The remainder of the session engages participants in vigorous physical exercise, alternating daily between strength and aerobic training. The curriculum is divided into five chapters.

- A Healthy Heart;
- Physical Activity and the Heart;
- Nutrition;
- Stress; and
- Smoking and the Heart.

Student workbooks include daily exercises and activities for each lecture and discussion topic. The Teacher Manual gives detailed discussion of suggested resistance and aerobic exercises, background information on lecture topics, participant questionnaires, and general implementation guidance.

PREVIOUS USE

Since the program's inception in 1993, more than 50 schools serving over 40,000 students have participated in PATH in the United States.
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TRAINING

PE teachers facilitate this program and must participate in an in-service training provided by the program developer. Please contact the program developer using details provided in the Contact section. In addition, teachers may find it useful to examine the implementation guide and the curriculum manual before administering the program. These resources can be downloaded for free from http://rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/productDownloads.do?programId=781968

CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for implementing this program include acquiring buy-in from PE teachers, obtaining training for PE teachers, and adjusting academic schedules to provide additional time for classes.

The Clearinghouse can help address these considerations. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

IMPLEMENTATION

If you are interested in implementing PATH, the Clearinghouse is interested in helping you! Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

PATH sessions are 30 minutes each, 5 days a week for 12 weeks. The first 5 to 10 minutes are for lecture/discussion, and the remaining 20 to 25 minutes are for vigorous physical exercise.

Program materials, including a Teacher Manual and Student Curriculum and Workbook, must be purchased from the developer. Please contact the developer using details in the Contact section for more information.

EVALUATION PLAN

To move the PATH Program to the Promising category on the Clearinghouse Continuum of Evidence, at least one evaluation should be performed demonstrating positive effects lasting at least six months from program completion.

The Clearinghouse can help you develop an evaluation plan to ensure the program components are meeting your goals. Please call 1-877-382-9185 or email Clearinghouse@psu.edu

CONTACT

Contact the Clearinghouse with any questions regarding this program.

Phone: 1-877-382-9185 Email: Clearinghouse@psu.edu

You may also contact Marcia Bayne-Smith by mail Queens College, City University of New York, Powdermaker Room 250, Queens NY, 11367-1597, phone 1-718-997-250, or email marcia.smith@qc.cuny.edu

SOURCE


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