

Can Schools Play a Role in Increasing Physical Activity in Parents and Teachers? A New Approach for Behavior Internalization in Adults

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Dear Editor,

In today's communities, there is a trend of sedentary life habits spreading all over the world (1). According to some reports, 21.5% of the Iranian population are physically inactive (2). The reason for most of noncommunicable diseases could be sedentary or low activity lifestyle (3). It's worthy of note that there are researchers trying to fight the current situation through proper education at schools for the next generation (4).

A school is a place where children will learn about social interaction amongst their friends, and see their teachers as perfect examples of social role models. School, as part of its roles, is responsible for cultivation and behavioural adaptation, hence a crucial learning platform in a community.

There has been a lot of research on the importance of school-family relations towards an effective behavioural adaptation, all insisting on family's role for internalization of children and youth's behaviour (5). Therefore, different models have been applied to strengthen the families' role, aligning it with school teachings such as academy of parents, and the centre for consultation of families at schools (6). Studies proved that teaching life skills to families, has decreased destructive behavioural disorder in children (7). Beside children and youth's behavioural adaptation in schools, behaviour internalization for adults and families has been under study too. An example of this experimental behavioural adaptation is the successful police-mate program throughout Iran, which has decreased car accidents and traffic law violations for about 18%. considering the results, it is practical to take advantage of schools additionally as means of behavioural adaptation for physical activities in adults.

Based on the latest statistics published in Iran, there are 19 million mothers, fathers and teachers connected to schools through their children or students (8). This consists of 25% of the country's population, which would be

accessible for behavioural adaptation through schools.

There are possible interventional actions, regarding this population, to internalize physical activities, such as family discussion sessions, individual consulting and scheduling to increase families' physical activities, families' participation during PE classes, employing schools' free space for family physical activities, opening athletic clubs at school with families' participation, "Friday Sports" with parent and student participation, "PE homework" for students in cooperation with their parents etc.

It's also possible to use schools as a platform for behavioural adaptation in terms of role modelling for physical activity. So, increasing physical activity amongst teachers may have two benefits. First, teacher as a role model for student and second, advantages that sports have for teachers themselves.

Of course, one must know that school-based interventions for behavioural adaptation in adults may be faced with limitations. Based on the Trans Theoretical Model, schools are effective platforms preparing individuals for change, yet in further steps the society must be prepared to take them in (9). Authors are trying to run some interventions for evaluating the effectiveness of this model of behavior internalization in adults.

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