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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Adolescents' physical activity is associated with previous and current physical activity practice by their parents[☆]

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KEYWORDS

Current physical activity;
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Social support;
Modeling

Abstract

Objective: The purpose of this study was to determine whether parents' current and previous physical activity practice is associated with adolescents' physical activity.

Methods: The sample was composed of 1231 adolescents (14–17 years), and 1202 mothers and 871 fathers were interviewed. Weight and height of the adolescents were measured. Self-reported parents' weight and height were obtained. The current and previous physical activity levels (Baecke's questionnaire) of parents (during childhood and adolescence) and adolescents' physical activity levels were obtained using a questionnaire. The magnitude of the associations between parent and adolescent physical activity levels was determined by binary logistic regression (adjusted by sex, age, and socioeconomic level of adolescents and education level of parents).

Results: The current physical activity practice by parents was associated with adolescents' physical activity ($p < 0.001$). The physical activities reported by parents in their childhood and adolescence were also associated with higher physical activity levels among adolescents. Adolescents whose parents were both physically active in the past and present were six times (OR = 6.67 [CI = 1.94–22.79]) more likely to be physically active compared to adolescents with no parents who were physically active in the past.

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59**PALAVRAS-CHAVE**Atividade física atual;
Atividade física
anterior;
Pais;
Adolescentes;
Apoio social;
Modelo

Conclusions: The current and previous physical activities of parents were associated with higher levels of physical activity in adolescents, even after controlling for confounding factors.

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A atividade física de adolescentes está associada à prática de atividade física anterior e atual por seus pais**Resumo**

Objetivo: A finalidade deste estudo foi determinar se a prática de atividade física atual e anterior dos pais está associada à atividade física dos adolescentes.

Métodos: A mostra foi composta por 1.231 adolescentes (14-17 anos), e foram entrevistados 1.202 mães e 871 pais. Foram medidos o peso e a altura dos adolescentes. Foram obtidos o peso e a altura autorrelatados dos pais. Os níveis de atividade física atual e anterior (questionário de Baecke) dos pais (durante a infância e adolescência) e os níveis de atividade física dos adolescentes foram obtidos utilizando um questionário. A magnitude das associações entre os níveis de atividade física dos pais e adolescentes foi determinada por regressão logística binária (ajustada por sexo, idade e nível socioeconômico dos adolescentes e nível de escolaridade dos pais).

Resultados: A prática atual de atividade física pelos pais foi associada à prática de atividade dos adolescentes ($p < 0,001$). As atividades físicas relatadas pelos pais em sua infância e adolescência também foram associadas aos maiores níveis de atividade física entre os adolescentes. Os adolescentes cujos pais eram fisicamente ativos no passado e atualmente foram seis vezes ($RC = 6,67 [IC = 1,94-22,79]$) mais propensos a ser fisicamente ativos em comparação aos adolescentes cujos pais não eram fisicamente ativos no passado.

Conclusões: As atividades físicas atuais e anteriores dos pais foram associadas aos maiores níveis de atividade física nos adolescentes, mesmo após o controle de fatores de confusão.

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Introduction

Physical inactivity in young people has increased in both developing and developed countries. In Brazil, almost 80% of children and adolescents were insufficiently active.¹ Given that physical inactivity in youth has been associated with increased cardiovascular risk,^{2,3} understanding the factors associated with physical inactivity in this age group has been considered important for public health actions.

Studies have shown a modeling (imitation of behavior of a person who is considered an example) influence of friends in adolescents' physical activity practice.⁴ In addition, the parents' current physical activity has also been shown to be a model for children's physical activity levels.⁵⁻⁷ For example, a longitudinal study including 13,000 students observed that parents' physical activity was associated with children's physical activity.⁸ Other investigators⁹ have also reported associations between parents and children's physical activity. However, this is not a universal finding,¹⁰ which can be explained by the different social and cultural contexts of the studies. Thereby, studies in different countries are needed to understand the modeling of parents on their offspring's physical activity levels.

Modeling parent physical activity has been explained by several factors, including the examples observed by their children in adopting physical activity habits.⁵ In addition,

factors that are independent of parents' current physical activity levels, such as encouraging children to be physically active and providing transportation to physical activity practices,⁵ have also been proposed to explain the associations between the physical activity of parents and children. Thus, it is plausible that parents who practiced sports in childhood and adolescence are more likely to provide this social support, even if they are not currently physically active.

Therefore, the objective of this study was to determine whether previous and current physical activity practice by parents is associated with adolescent's physical activity. The hypothesis was that adolescents whose parents practiced physical activity throughout their lives are more likely to be physically active.

Methods**Sample**

The sample consisted of adolescents aged 14–17 years from the six largest schools in the center of the city of Londrina-PR, located in southern Brazil, selected by convenience. These schools receive students from all regions of the city and, therefore, present a profile of students that represents the entire city. Sample size was estimated with a prevalence

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