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[Intervention Review]

Interventions implemented through sporting organisations for increasing participation in sport

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ABSTRACT

Background

There is now compelling scientific evidence that increased levels of physical activity can bring wide-ranging health benefits. These benefits can extend beyond physical health to include other positive impacts relating to mental health and personal development. The sport and recreation sector is viewed as a priority area for increasing rates of physical activity. Participation rates in organised sport have been shown to be lower in females and to decline with age, and are reduced in lower socio-economic and minority groups including people from non-English speaking and Indigenous backgrounds. It is important to determine the most effective interventions that sporting organisations can use to increase people's participation.

Objectives

To update a review of all controlled studies evaluating interventions implemented through sporting organisations to increase participation.

Search methods

We updated the original (2004) searches in May 2007. We searched: The Cochrane Central Register of Controlled Trials (CENTRAL, *The Cochrane Library*, Issue 2 2007); MEDLINE and MEDLINE In-Process and Other Non-Indexed Citations (2004 to Week 3 April 2007); EMBASE (2004 to Week 17 2007); PsycINFO (2004 to April Week 1 2007); CINAHL (2004 to Week 1 May 2007); SPORTDiscus (2004 to April 2007); Sociological Abstracts (2004 to 2007); Dissertation Abstracts (2004 to May 2007), and a number of freely-available online health promotion and sports-related databases. We used the internet extensively to search for studies and locate information generated by sporting bodies throughout the world.

Selection criteria

Controlled studies evaluating any intervention designed to increase active and/ or non-active participation in sport by people of all ages. Interventions could include: mass media campaigns; information or education sessions; management or organisational change strategies; policy changes, for example to improve the socio-cultural environment to encourage people of specific age, gender or ethnicity to participate; changes to traditional or existing programs, for example club or association-initiated rule modification programs; provision of activities beyond traditional or existing programs, for example 'Come and Try' initiatives (teaser or taster programs); skill improvement programs; volunteer encouragement programs.

Uncontrolled studies which met other inclusion criteria were to be reported in an annex to the review.

Data collection and analysis

We assessed whether identified citations met the inclusion criteria. Two review authors independently inspected abstracts (NP, RA). We obtained full papers where necessary. As we located no controlled evaluation studies, we did not undertake data collection or analysis. We found no uncontrolled studies meeting other inclusion criteria, and therefore present no annex to the review.

Main results

Despite a thorough review of the published and unpublished literature, we found no rigorous studies evaluating the effects of interventions organised through sporting organisations to increase participation in sport.

Authors' conclusions

There is an absence of high quality evidence to support interventions designed and delivered by sporting organisations to increase participation in sport. Interventions funded and conducted in this area must be linked to a rigorous evaluation strategy in order to examine overall effectiveness, socio-demographic differentials in participation and cost-effectiveness of these strategies.

PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY**Interventions implemented through sporting organisations for increasing people's participation in sport**

The sport sector is viewed as a priority area for increasing rates of physical activity. Participation rates in organised sport have been shown to be lower in females and to decline with age, and are reduced in lower socio-economic and minority groups. It is important to determine the most effective interventions that sporting organisations can use to increase people's participation and reduce inequalities. In this systematic review of the literature we did not find any controlled studies assessing the effects of interventions to increase participation in sport.