

SUCCESSFUL EXPERIENCES

for overweight children in sport

Presenter / Research Coordinator: Shea Balish¹
Principal Investigators: Laurene Rehman¹, Chris Shields²
Co-applicants: Mark Bruner³, Melanie Keats¹
 Dalhousie University¹, Acadia University², Nipissing University³



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Overweight Children and Team Sport



Method

- Dual-phase, mixed-methods design.
 - **Phase I** involved collecting survey data from children (ages 10-14) and their parents/guardians (N=233 dyads).
 - **Phase II** involved qualitative data collection via semi-structured interviews with parents (N=24) and coaches (N=8) recruited in Phase I.
- Three recruitment sites
 - Halifax NS
 - Wolfville NS
 - North bay ON

Parental Views of Overweight Athletes

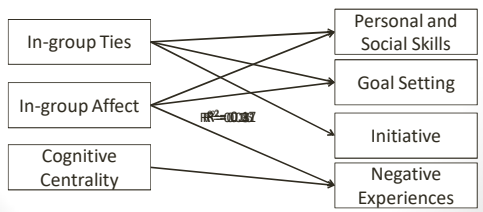
- Explored the supports and challenges of overweight youth participating in sport.
- Qualitative
 - Semi-structured interviews with 24 parents
- Parents described that they often sought sport as a new context to develop independence, self-esteem, wider social networks, team identity, and physical activity.
- Challenges related to the structure and lack of spontaneity and aspects of play associated with participation in structured sport/recreation.

“Pulling One’s Weight”

- Explored peers and coach’s experiences and perceptions of overweight youth to better understand motivational factors.
- Mixed method
 - Semi-structured interviews (N = 8) with coaches.
 - Children (N = 164, 59% female) completed an experimental impression formation vignette depicting a “heavy” or “tall” athlete.
- **Qualitative** themes converged on the perceived importance of youths’ negative performance experiences within a team. Feeling like the “weakest link.”
- **Quantitative** vignette revealed that children negatively perceive heavy athletes relative to tall athletes, especially as having decreased self-confidence.

Connection → Positive Development?

- Explored the association between social identity and positive youth development in recreational sport.
- Quantitative
 - 233 children (58% female) completed survey measures



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    graph LR
      A[In-group Ties] --> B[Personal and Social Skills]
      A --> C[Goal Setting]
      A --> D[Initiative]
      A --> E[Negative Experiences]
      F[In-group Affect] --> B
      F --> C
      F --> D
      F --> E
      G[Cognitive Centrality] --> B
      G --> C
      G --> D
      G --> E
    
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Practical Applications

- Feelings of competence is central to motivation for sport
 - Talk is cheap, so we need to facilitate “deep” mastery experiences.
 - These feelings may need to develop “naturally”
- Feeling tied to an “in-group” may facilitate personal development.
 - How can we develop in-group ties and emotion?

Conclusion

- Results converged on feelings of incompetence and the amplifying effect of team sports.
- Coaches may need to develop “deep” strategies to foster feelings of competence in overweight youth.
- Specific dimensions of team identity in recreational sport are related to different forms of positive youth development. In particular, in-group affect may be particularly important.