

Euro Health Care and Fitness Summit

September 01-03, 2015 Valencia, Spain

Evaluation of a real world intervention using professional football players to promote a healthy diet and physical activity in children and adolescents from a lower socio-economic background: A controlled pretest-posttest design

Dubuy Veerle

Howest University for Applied Sciences, Belgium

Background: The increasing rates of obesity among children and adolescents, especially in those from lower socio-economic backgrounds, emphasize the need for interventions promoting a healthy diet and physical activity. The present study aimed to examine the effectiveness of the 'Health Scores' program, which combined professional football player role models with a school-based program to promote a healthy diet and physical activity to socially vulnerable children and adolescents.

Methods: The intervention was implemented in two settings: Professional football clubs and schools. Socially vulnerable children and adolescents (n=165 intervention group, n=440 control group, aged 10-14 year) provided self-reported data on dietary habits and physical activity before and after the four-month intervention. Intervention effects were evaluated using repeated measures analysis of variance. In addition, a process evaluation was conducted.

Results: No intervention effects were found for several dietary behaviors, including consumption of breakfast, fruit, soft drinks or sweet and savory snacks. Positive intervention effects were found for self-efficacy for having a daily breakfast ($p<0.01$), positive attitude towards vegetables consumption ($p<0.01$) and towards lower soft drink consumption ($p<0.001$). A trend towards significance ($p<0.10$) was found for self-efficacy for reaching the physical activity guidelines. For sports participation no significant intervention effect was found. In total, 92 pupils completed the process evaluation, the feedback was largely positive.

Conclusions: The 'Health Scores' intervention was successful in increasing psycho-social correlates of a healthy diet and PA. The use of professional football players as a credible source for health promotion was appealing to socially vulnerable children and adolescents.

Biography

Dubuy Veerle completed her Bachelors' degree in Applied Psychology from Howest University for Applied Sciences. Several years later she completed her Masters' degree in health promotion and her PhD in Health Sciences from Ghent University. Currently she is a Lecturer at Howest University for Applied Sciences where she teaches courses in both the field of sports and movement and applied psychology. She has published several articles all on the evaluation of real-world interventions in reputed journals in the area of physical activity promotion.

veerle.dubuy@howest.be

Notes: