

Are youth population suffering from physical inactivity?

Over the past 30 to 40 years, the volume and intensity of daily physical activity among youth has gradually declined.

In the United States only about half of youth meet the recommended guideline of at least 60 minutes of vigorous or moderate physical activity each day.

A lack of activity increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, anxiety and depression, and other diseases.

Recent studies have found that in terms of mortality, the global public health burden of physical inactivity approaches that of cigarette smoking and obesity.

Physical activity improves other aspects of health and fitness including aerobic capacity, muscle and bone strength, reduction of anxiety, depression and stress, self-concept and academic performance. 48 to 69 percent of students did not attend physical education classes in an average week.

Since the passing of the *No child left behind Act* nearly half of school administrators reported cutting significant time from physical education and recess to increase time spent in reading and mathematics given that children spend up to 7 hours each day in school and many attend after-school programs; it is important to examine the role schools play, the opportunity to influence so many children at once makes schools an extremely attractive option for increasing physical activity.

The Institute of Medicine recommends a whole of school approach to physical activity, allowing for at least 60 minutes per day of activity that is of vigorous or moderate intensity where at least half is accomplished during regular school hours and the other half occurs in the school environment. This is where the majority of youth can be reached regardless of their socio-economic background.

Physical activities should be included in recess, dedicated classroom activity time, active transportation, before and after school programs, intramural and extramural sports and in physical education classes.

Let's educate the student body!