Author's response to reviews

Title: PLAYgrounds: Effect of a PE playground program in primary schools on PA levels during recess in 6 to 12 year old children. Design of a prospective controlled trial

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Version: 3 Date: 4 April 2011

Author's response to reviews: see over
March 2nd, 2011

BioMed Central
BMC Public Health
Open Access Publisher

Re: Janssen et al. PLAYgrounds: Effect of a PE playground program in primary schools on PA levels during recess in 6 to 12 year old children. Design of a prospective controlled trial.

Dear editor,

Please find enclosed the study protocol “PLAYgrounds: Effect of a PE playground program in primary schools on PA levels during recess in 6 to 12 year old children. Design of a prospective controlled trial“, by Mirka Janssen, Huub M. Toussaint, Willem van Mechelen en Evert ALM Verhagen. We would like to submit the study protocol for publication to the BMC Public Health.

The relative number of children meeting the minimal required dose of daily physical activity (PA) remains execrably low. It has been estimated that in 2015 one out of five children will be overweight. Therefore, low levels of PA during early childhood may compromise the current and future health and well-being of the population, and promoting PA in younger children is a major public health priority. This objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a playground intervention program using a prospective controlled trial design with a follow-up of one school year. The research population will consist of 6-12 year old primary school children. The intervention program will be aimed at improving PA levels and will consist of a multi-component alteration of the schools’ playground. In addition, playground usage will be increased through altered time management of recess times, as well as a modification of the PE content. Our study is unique since it is, to our knowledge, the first to link the playground to the PE curriculum and also because of the low-cost alteration of the schools’ playground.

The role of each author in the preparation of the study protocol was as follows:
Mirka Janssen: formulated the study hypothesis, discussed core ideas and participated in writing the paper.
Huub M Toussaint: discussed core ideas and contributed to writing the paper.
Willem van Mechelen: discussed core ideas and contributed to writing the paper.
Evert ALM Verhagen: coordinated the formulation of the study hypothesis, discussed core ideas and participated in writing the paper.

All authors have read and approved submission of the study protocol. The authors state that the study protocol is being submitted only to the BMC Public Health, and will not be submitted elsewhere while under consideration. None of the authors have any affiliation, financial agreement, or other involvement with any company whose products might play a role in the study protocol.

Yours sincerely,

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