Author’s response to reviews

Title: Rationale and study protocol of the EASY Minds (Encouraging Activity to Stimulate Young Minds) program: Cluster randomized controlled trial of a primary school-based physical activity integration program for mathematics

Authors:

  Nicholas Riley (Nicholas.Riley@newcastle.edu.au)
  David R Lubans (David.Lubans@newcastle.edu.au)
  Kathryn Holmes (Kathryn.Holmes@newcastle.edu.au)
  Philip J Morgan (Philip.Morgan@newcastle.edu.au)

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To: Editor of BMC Public Health

Dear Editor

We wish to submit the enclosed manuscript titled: “Rationale and study protocol of the EASY Minds (Encouraging Activity to Stimulate Young Minds) program: Cluster randomized controlled trial of a primary school-based physical activity integration program for mathematics for consideration for publication in BMC Public Health.

‘Easy Minds’ is a novel primary school based intervention that involves the integration of physical activity within the mathematics curriculum. Movement-based learning approaches were embedded in the school mathematics program. Although schools have been identified as important institutions for the promotion of physical activity (PA) among children, the crowded curriculum has impacted upon the quality and quantity of physical activity opportunities provided. Consequently, schools need to explore novel strategies for physical activity promotion throughout the school day. Furthermore, there has been a general decline in interest in mathematics and teachers need to find new strategies to engage students.

Ethics approval was obtained from the University of Newcastle, NSW, Australia (H-2010-1183) Ethics approval was also obtained from the NSW Department for Education and Communities (SERAP-2013011). This study was then externally funded by the NSW Department for Education and Communities.

A copy of these approvals has been emailed to BMCSeriesEditorial@biomedcentral.com

As detailed in a recent review (Erwin et al. 2012), there is a shortage of well-designed classroom-based physical activity interventions that explore the impact of novel school-based approaches to physical activity promotion that do not add burden to teachers in already crowded curriculums. As such, we believe this study represents a unique and important contribution to this area. In addition, we believe this study will be of great interest to readers of your journal for the following reasons:

- Our study had several strengths: a clustered randomized design, it is an innovative and unique program that specifically integrates physical activity across the primary school curriculum, and uses an objective measure for the primary outcome. The study is unique in that it uses accelerometers to measure both school-based MVPA and sedentary time and also uses the current maths curriculum.

This study is still ongoing and the investigators are currently analyzing data.

No publications relating to the results of this study have been published or submitted to any other journal.

This manuscript represents original work that has not been published elsewhere. This manuscript has not and will not be submitted for publication elsewhere until a decision is made regarding its acceptability for publication in the BMC Public Health. If accepted for publication, it will not be published elsewhere. The authors of this manuscript have full control of all associated data, and this data may be viewed upon request. There are no perceived financial conflicts of interest of any of the authors related to the research reported in the manuscript. The manuscript has been read and approved by all authors, the requirements for authorship have been met and each author believes the manuscript represents honest work. We look forward to your response.
Kind Regards,

Nick Riley