

MY USRI JOURNEY: ADOLESCENT GIRLS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY ENGAGEMENT AND BODY IMAGE DEVELOPMENT

SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Dr. Eva Pila, and Western research for giving me this incredible USRI opportunity. I am so grateful for the incredible support from Dr. Pila and her BIH lab. I learned so many valuable skills, and insight for my future research endeavours.

EXTRA ACTIVITIES

- Attended BIH lab conferences.
- Presented at a symposium with Dr. Prapavessis' lab.
- Did a presentation to a youth research group in California about my journey thus far.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the relationship between weight-based teasing and physical activity engagement among adolescent girls?
2. What are the moderating effects of self-compassion on the relationship between weight-based teasing and physical activity engagement?

MY TASKS

- Recruitment and data collection for a one-time online survey for adolescent girls.
- Secondary analysis of existing data.
- Support the BIH lab's social media accounts with content focused on educating the community on ongoing and past research projects.
- Attend bi weekly lab meetings, and perform all lab activities.

MAIN PROJECT

Participation in sport and physical activity is associated with numerous physical and psychological benefits (Eime et al., 2013). However, general findings about physical activity and sport in young people suggest that girls are more physically inactive than boys, that these reduced rates of participation further increase with age (Trost et al., 2002). While there are a number of potential reasons for the observed gender differences in adolescent physical activity participation, researchers have proposed that teasing may in part influence girls' participation in physical activity (Slater & Tiggemann, 2011).

Self-compassion has been highlighted as a protective factor that may buffer the negative effects of body image threats. However, the absence of research examining the relationship between self-compassion and weight-based teasing leaves much unknown. To date, a small number of cross-sectional studies have investigated the relationship between weight-based teasing and participation in sport and physical activity among adolescent girls. The purpose of the present study is to examine the cross-sectional relationship between weight-based teasing, physical activity participation, and self-compassion among a sample of adolescent girls.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Once the completed data analysis is done, we expect to see that weight-based teasing will be negatively associated with physical activity engagement among girls. As well as, weight-based teasing and physical activity engagement will be significantly and neegatively associated among girls lower in self compassion.

This means that:

- Girls who are more frequently teased about their weight will engage less in physical activity.
- Girls that experience high frequency of weight-based teasing but also rate high in self-compassion will be associated with more physical activity engagement.
- Girls who experience high-weight based teasing but low self-compassion will be associated with less physical activity engagement.

OBJECTIVE

Compared to boys, adolescent girls disengage from sport and exercise at a disproportionately higher rate and are at higher risk for body shame and self objectification (Caspersen, Pereira, & Curran; 2000; Trost et al., 2002; Van Mechelen, Twisk, Post, Snel, & Kemper, 2000). This gender inequity in sport and physical activity is first observed in adolescence and tracks well into adulthood. The purpose of this summer's research activities examined how self-compassion and weight-related stigma relate to self-conscious emotions and sport and physical activity participation.

STEPS

Recruitment through social media platforms and by word of mouth.

- Single assessment (i.e., cross sectional study) of adolescent girls (14-18), regardless of sport participation.

Data collection via Qualtrics.

All statistical analyses will be conducted using IBM SPSS.

IMPACT

The findings from this study have the potential to extend the existing literature on adolescent physical activity participation and advance our current understanding of the association between weight-based teasing, physical activity, and self-compassion among adolescent girls. While future experimental research might be necessary to establish causal relationships, the results of this study have potential practical implications for health promotion strategies that focus on protecting against the harmful effects of weight-based teasing and maintaining physical activity participation among adolescent girls.