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Prioritizing research on multi-stakeholder approach to improve physical activity among adolescents in India

The looming concern-

Regular physical activity in early life for better health status in adulthood has been reiterated through research. Physical inactivity is a major modifiable risk factor contributing to higher non communicable diseases like diabetes, heart disease and strokes. [1] Overweight in adolescents is a marker of overweight in adult age and is associated with cardiovascular diseases and diabetes mellitus. [9] Prevalence of overweight and obesity have been relatively more among middle and higher socio economic status (SES). [5] Degenerative diseases are burgeoning in India along with the burden of communicable diseases. The developed countries have formulated physical activity programs and reviewed it cost effective. Improved physical activity would curtail the DALYs (Disability Adjusted Life Years) and concurrently facilitate active ageing. There has been paucity of studies in India which pilot physical activity programme or incorporate health behavioral policies. Adolescents should be moderately or vigorously active for about 60 minutes per day. [2] A recent study in New Delhi reports physical activity level merely up to 29% in private schools and 11.3% in government funded schools, increasing physical activity and cost effective interventions director have been advocated. [3] Given limited resources for care of coronary heart disease in India and the important role of physical exercise in disease risk in urban India, improvements in physical activity should be promoted.[4,6,11] A 34 country comparison study concludes that majority of students did not meet physical activity recommendations and had high levels of sedentariness.[6] Multiple stakeholder approach is called for when addressing issues like physical activity of adolescents where the concern lies across sectors and disciplines. A recent study has shown that school students may be motivated towards physical education and enjoy it. [8] Further research should examine 'interaction models' rather than 'partnership models' because the partnership brings together all manners of interaction under one umbrella of "partnership" leading to subsumption of dissimilar issues. [7] Stakeholders would encompass; decision makers of related to the concern, integrators who actively support the program, implementers involved in program operations, participants who are at the receiving end of the program.

Research Gap:

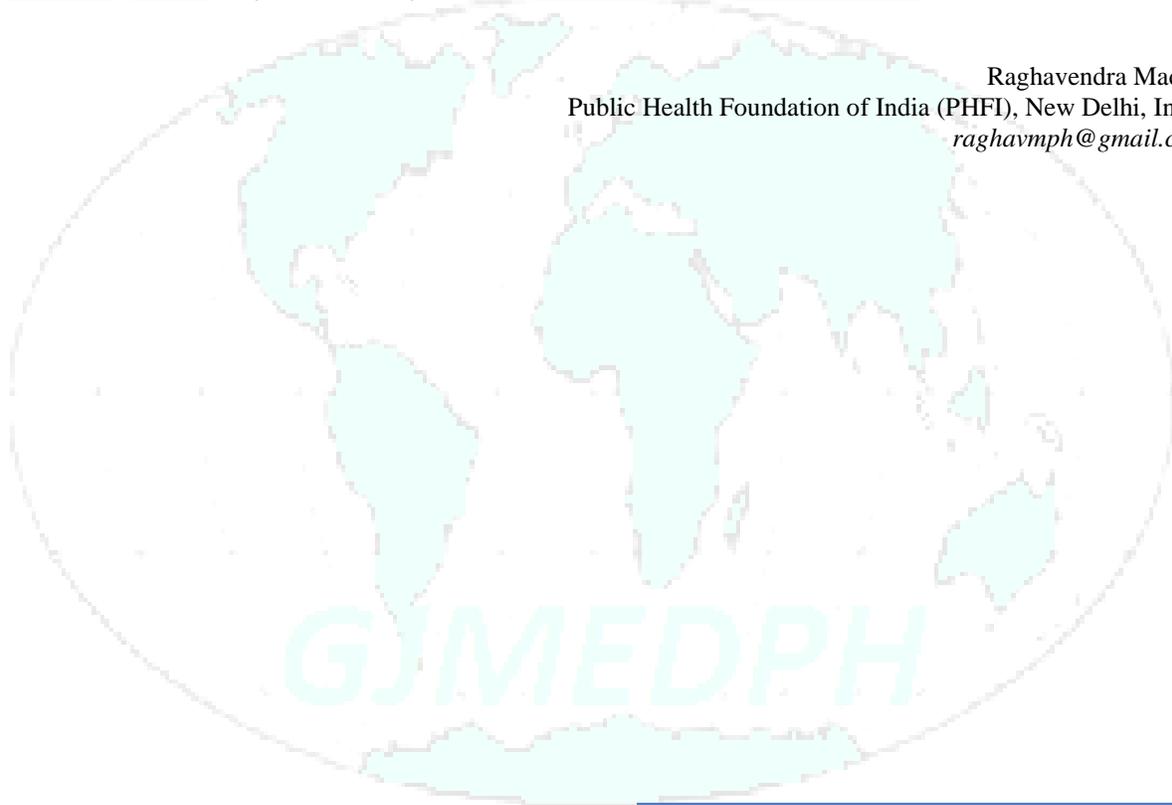
Innumerable studies have advocated a multi-stakeholder approach as crucial to emphatic lifestyle changes but no models have been tested nor suggested which studies the involvement of all possible stakeholders in rising physical activity. Most of the national and international public health reports and studies advocate multiple sector policy approach but few efforts have been initiated to integrate the possible inputs every stakeholder could contribute. Physical activity initiatives have been but isolated and single sector which have not been able to merge into the public health system model. The current situation necessitates a study which could promote interaction of allied sector along with policy changes that could bring in comprehensive efforts towards a better socio-political adolescent physical activity model. Lack of conceptual models and the inherent difficulties of evaluation have hampered research on such explorative interventions which involves system and governance approach. [10] Moreover most of the models in health promotion deal with individuals or community, few deals with stakeholder involvements except for public private partnership model- even the success of which has been skeptical in developed countries thus further assessments in this area are required. Research intending to explore barriers in multiple-stakeholder interactions with regard to improving physical activity levels of school going adolescents and developing a multi-stakeholder model pertaining to increasing physical activity levels among school going adolescents must be explored in India.

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