

The effect of the school-based GoActive programme on adolescent physical activity levels.

Most teenagers do not do enough physical activity. Low physical activity levels are linked to poor physical and mental health. The GoActive programme was created with help from teachers and students. In a small previous study, GoActive was implemented in two schools by trained research staff and seemed to increase teenagers' physical activity .

In this larger study, we studied the effect of GoActive in sixteen secondary state schools across Cambridgeshire and Essex. Eight schools ran the GoActive programme, without help from trained research staff (intervention schools), and eight continued with their usual activities (controls). GoActive was designed so older teenagers (mentors) could run the activities with Year-9s, instead of needing teacher time. Each class chose two activities each week; mentors and in-class-peer-leaders encouraged students to try new activities. Year-9s received points for trying new activities, which could be exchanged for small prizes. The cost of running GoActive was £2519.26 per school.

Overall, 2862 13-14-year-olds took part (Year-9s). All were asked to wear an activity monitor at the start and end of the programme. The results show that the GoActive programme implemented by the schools did not increase Year-9s' physical activity levels compared to the normal school curriculum. All schools ended up running the programme slightly differently for practical reasons. Therefore, we cannot be certain that GoActive did not work as it was not run as planned. Further work needs to explore how to help individual schools run programmes like GoActive.