

Improving physical education teachers' action with overweight students

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays, overweight is one of the most important plagues and many authors believe that the fast increase of this phenomenon during the last decades can be considered as a global epidemic. School has been identified as one of the pillars of the necessary multisectorial approach that must be implemented to fight against this inexorable trend. According to this, promotion of physical activity at school is become a priority. Logically, physical education teachers are considered as the most appropriate actors of the implementation of active school projects. As stated by health specialists that we have interviewed (Cloes & Ziant, 2010), they should be able to deal with the presence of overweight students. Nevertheless, we pointed out that they were lacking of specific knowledge and were rather reluctant to deal with overweight student for fear of doing wrong (negative psychological reactions). It was necessary to propose to PE teachers and specialists of obesity/overweight to meet in order to build bridges over the gap between the two groups of actors.

This paper will describe a research project that we implemented in the perspective to develop a collaboration between six PE teachers and six specialists. Using the nominal group technique, problems encountered by physical educators when facing overweight/obese students were identified. Strategies of action were suggested and discussed. After this session, during four months, the PE teachers experienced them freely with their classes. At the end of the project, both groups met again in order to share the experiences. All subjects underlined the interest of this collaboration.

Keywords: physical education, overweight, obesity, physical activity promotion
