Why is it necessary to change the physical activity representations in women?

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2nd IAPESGW Regional Symposium
Teheran, Iran - December 13-15, 2015

Two hypotheses
- People has wrong representations about physical activity
- Women are a group at risk of sedentariness

A representation is a mental image that someone has about something

Why the representations about PA?

Representations about PA are important because...
- Determining variable for behaviour change

Prochaska, Norcross et DiClemente (1994)
What to consider about representations on PA?
- Definition – What is PA?
- Impact – What are the PA’s effects?
- Recommendations – What to do?
- Self-analysis – Do I practice enough?
- Action – How can I do to reach the goal?

So, it is important to fight against wrong representations
- Physical activity = sport
- Effectiveness = high intensity
- It takes time
- Weekend only
- It is expensive

Physical activity in girls and women?

Specific problems of girls?
- Overall finding
  - At risk population for sedentariness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Competition</th>
<th>Leisure</th>
<th>Both</th>
<th>No sport</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of students involved in sport according to gender and skill level (%)

Specific problems of girls?
- Overall finding
  - At risk population for sedentariness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Frequency of sport activity</th>
<th>Girls +</th>
<th>Girls -</th>
<th>Boys +</th>
<th>Boys -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>1 time/week</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>4.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>2-3 times/week</td>
<td>48.3</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>48.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>4-6 times/week</td>
<td>31.7</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Every day</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Proportion of students involved in sport according to gender and skill level and frequency (1997-1998)
Currie et al. (2012)

13 year-old 13 year-old 15 year-old

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>11 year-old</th>
<th>13 year-old</th>
<th>15 year-old</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WAL</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRA</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LUX</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GER</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Heyters & Marique (2004)

- Adiposity
- At risk population for sedentariness

- Decrease of the fitness level (WAL)
- Strength - Musc. power
- Muscle and run endurance
- Balance - Flexibility

Tafforeau (2008)

- Negative attitude
- Low interest for physical effort
- Cultural aspect
  - Physical activity = sport
  - Sport, it is ‘viril’ = boys (de Coubertin!)
  - Forbidden to show the body
- Appraisal, affectivity, respect from important persons
  - Father going to watch his son playing football but not his daughter dancing in a ballet
  - Teasing/Behaviours ('Crying like a girl')
- Greater attention for male performances (+++ records)
Specific problems of girls?

- Negative attitude → low interest for physical effort
  - Self-esteem problem, perception of own value
    - Women are less interested by competition (ego/task)
    - Priority to aesthetic aspects (society)
    - Level of competence/performance (hormones modification at the puberty → fat % decreasing performance and modifying appearance)
  - Representations and believes from others
    - Female athletes are not elegant
    - Body transformation
    - Homosexuality

- Barriers
  - Discrimination
  - Sexism
  - Lack of specific activities
  - Lack of models (mothers + athletes)
  - Lack of opportunities of development
  - Ineffective parents’ education
  - Prediction effect

How to fight?

- Self-determination theory
  - Increase perception of autonomy
  - Increase perception of competence
  - Increase perception of interrelatedness
- Ego/task theory
  - Emphasize cooperation instead of competition
- Quality Physical Education/Sport
  - Fight against infectious physical educators
  - Increase the quality of PETE

The PAMIA principles

- P - Foster play/pleasure: give meaningfulness and increase pleasure
- A - Foster achievement and learning: 70-80% («delicious uncertainty») through individualizing (levels +1 et -1; individual goals)
- M - Foster movement: propose activities situations that lead students to move, to expand energy
- I - Foster interactions: increase contact with others and with the environment
- A - Foster autonomy: give students opportunities to make decisions

Take home message
Girls and women need to be as much physically active than males. They should be supported to be active. Their wrong representations need to be changed. As well as those of the whole society as physical educators/parents/sports leaders.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead

It's up to you, now!

http://hdl.handle.net/2268/189141

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References


