Physical Activity among Adolescents in a Swedish Multicultural Area
An Empowerment-Based Health Promotion School Intervention

av

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Abstract

Title: Physical Activity among Adolescents in a Swedish Multicultural Area
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The overarching aim of the present thesis was two-fold. The first aim was to
describe and critically reflect upon the experiences of developing and
implementing an empowerment-based school intervention, focusing on food and
physical activity, involving adolescents from a Swedish multicultural area
characterized by low socioeconomic status. The second aim was to investigate
accelerometer-measured sedentary time and physical activity among the
adolescents, and to evaluate the effects of the intervention on these variables.

The two-year intervention was continually developed and implemented, as a
result of cooperation and shared decision making among researchers and the
participating adolescents. Data was collected in seventh, eighth and ninth grade
using documentation and observation protocols, accelerometers, and
questionnaires.

This thesis shows the importance of acquiring a broad and deep understanding
of the targeted context and the participants of the intervention, and to be open-
minded when it comes to negotiating, adjusting, and reorganizing empowerment-
based interventions. This thesis further shows that the participating girls
accumulated more sedentary time and less moderate-to-vigorous physical activity
than boys, and that approximately half of the adolescents met the physical activity
recommendations. The intervention had no positive effects on sedentary time and
moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. Finally, this thesis shows that cautiousness
is warranted when cross-comparing accelerometer-based studies with different
epoch durations and cut-points.