

Trends in Physical Fitness Among School-Aged Children & Adolescents: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

Authors

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AIM

Analyse the international evolution of fitness with its distributional changes in the performance on tests of physical fitness among school-aged children and adolescents.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Physical fitness is a multicomponent construct that is closely related to the ability to perform physical activity. It is considered to be an important health marker, because high levels of fitness during childhood and adolescence have a positive impact on adult health.



METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

In accordance with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) guidelines, the search was undertaken in four international databases (ERIC, PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science) to identify the studies reporting temporal trends in the physical fitness among school-aged children and adolescents.



THE SUBJECTS WERE TESTED USING 45 MOTOR TESTS FROM 8 BATTERY TESTS.

The vast majority of studies show a constant decline in strength and endurance.

- Three Chinese studies show an increase in strength from 1985 to 1995 and then a decline until 2014.
- For endurance, similar patterns were found in the two most comprehensive Chinese studies.
- The decline in flexibility is also evident in European countries.
- For agility, speed, balance, and coordination, the trend differs among populations.

IMPLICATION

This study provides a comprehensive overview of longitudinal changes in the physical fitness of children and adolescents and thereby indicates relevant knowledge to develop appropriate public health strategies.

Reference

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KEY FINDINGS

19

485

A total of 485 potential articles were identified, of which 19 articles were relevant for the qualitative synthesis.



1,746,023 children and adolescents from 14 countries

China, Finland, Sweden, Belgium, New Zealand, Denmark, Spain, Norway, Mozambique, Poland, USA, Lithuania, Portugal, Canada), for the period between 1969 and 2017 were included.

The quality of the study in eight articles was rated as strong, while in 11 articles it was rated as moderate.



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