Results from Hong Kong’s 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

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Introduction

Insufficient physical activity among children and youth is of great concern and has been overlooked in Hong Kong. The Active Healthy Kids Hong Kong was established in 2015 to consolidate evidence-based evaluation of physical activity related indicators for children and youth in Hong Kong. The first Hong Kong Report Card on Physical Activity in 2016 clearly showed a high level of physical inactivity and sedentary behavior for children and youth despite some promising policies in school and community. This paper aims to summarize the results of the 2018 Hong Kong Report Card which includes 12 indicators.

Methods

The systematic development process provided by the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance (https://www.activehealthykids.org/) was used. The 2018 Hong Kong Report Card included 10 core indicators that are common to the Global Matrix 3.0 (Overall Physical Activity, Organized Sport Participation, Active Play, Active Transportation, Sedentary Behaviors, Physical Fitness, Family, School, Community and Environment, and Government) and two new indicators (Sleep and Obesity).

The best available data over the past ten years (from March 2009 to February 2018) were consolidated and reviewed by a panel of experts. The search for data sources included published journal articles, government reports (including grant completion reports), manual searches and personal contacts. According to the predefined benchmarks, letter grades were assigned to the 12 indicators. The data sources relied upon were national surveys, e.g., “Healthy Exercise for All Campaign – Physical Fitness Test for the Community” and “Surveys on Physical Fitness Status of Hong Kong School Pupils”, as well as published journal articles from representative samples. Feedback on initial grades was collected from the stakeholder group via a face-to-face meeting and online consultation. The grades were audited by the Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance and then finalized.

Results and Discussion

Grades and rationale for the 2018 Hong Kong Report Card are provided in Table 1 (for the 10 indicators common to Global Matrix 3.0 only) and its cover page is shown in Figure 1. Four of the five behavior indicators grades had either slightly improved (Overall Physical Activity, Organized Sport Participation and Active Transportation) or deteriorated (Sedentary Behaviors) compared with the 2016 grades. The changes were due to newly added data sources and revisions to the grading scheme for Global Matrix 3.0, i.e., more clear-cut benchmarks for plus (+) and minus (-) grades.

Similar to 2016, Family was assigned the lowest grade (D-) among the three setting and sources of influence indicators in 2018. Although new data sources have been found, there were no compelling evidence suggesting obvious changes of School and Community and Environment. Since 2016, the government has made efforts in promoting sport culture in schools and increasing financial support for school sports programs. Consequently, the

Figure 1 — Hong Kong’s 2018 Report Card cover.
indicator Government Strategies and Investments was graded (C) in the 2018 Report Card. The two new indicators that are not included in Global Matrix 3.0 were graded C- (Sleep) and D- (Obesity). The rationale for them will be described in more detail in Hong Kong’s report card’s full paper.

Although there are some new data sources available for the 2018 Hong Kong Report Card, there are still surveillance gaps, especially for active play (not graded in both the 2016 and 2018 Report Card) and peer support.

### Conclusion

Children and youth in Hong Kong have low physical activity and physical fitness levels, and high sedentary behaviors despite a generally favorable community environment. The low level of family support warrant more public health actions. There is a surveillance gap in active play and peer support that researchers should address.

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### References


