Results From Brazil’s 2018 Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

Diego Augusto Santos Silva, Diego Giuliano Destro Christofaro, Gerson Luis de Moraes Ferrari, Kelly Samara da Silva, Nelson Nardo, Roberto Jerônimo dos Santos Silva, Rômulo Araújo Fernandes, and Valter Cordeiro Barbosa Filho

Introduction

The practice of regular physical activity in children and adolescents is important for better health and development throughout the life course. Nonetheless, data from Brazil’s 2016 Report Card revealed that only 40% of children and youth (6-19 years old) met the recommendations for moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA). This data also showed unfavorable grades for other behaviors (e.g., sedentary behavior and active transportation). This paper aims to summarize the results of Brazil’s 2018 Report Card.

Methods

The 2018 Report Card included the 10 core physical activity indicators that are common to the Global Matrix 3.0 and obesity prevalence, which made up four indicator dimensions: I) Daily Behaviors (5 indicators: Overall Physical Activity, Organized Sport Participation, Active Play, Active Transportation, Sedentary Behaviors); II) Settings and Sources of Influence (3 indicators: Family and Peers, School, Community and Environment); III) Government Strategies and Investments (1 indicator); and IV) Health Outcomes (2 indicators: Physical fitness, Obesity).

Comprehensive searches, including peer-reviewed and gray literature searches, were performed for each indicator. Data was considered from systematic reviews, local and national surveys, national reports (e.g., National Survey of School Health), website and official information on the policies from the Brazilian Government. All information published up to December 2017 were considered for this Report Card.

Brazil’s 2018 Report Card (Figure 1) was developed by a group of researchers with expertise in all areas of physical activity covered in the Report Card. This group of experts allowed transparency in the process and determined more accurate levels physical activity in Brazil. Systematic and narrative reviews were developed for each one of the indicators and published in the Brazilian Journal of Kinanthropometry and Human Performance (scientific journal from Brazil).

Results and Discussion

This is the second wave of Brazil’s Report Card and for the first time, information was reported for all the indicators surveyed in the Global Matrix (Table 1). This result was an effort by a diverse group of researchers who reviewed all the available national literature. The next step will be to give visibility to this information to make physical activity promotion in children and youth a priority in Brazil.

Figure 1 — Brazil’s 2018 Report Card cover.
Obesity was investigated for being considered a public health problem, one of the causes being physical inactivity. This indicator, obesity, is not addressed in the Global Matrix 3.0 and therefore it has been decided not to give a grade to it. The information on the obesity prevalence represents a parameter and allows other countries and regions to investigate this health outcome for future comparisons.

While all 11 indicators were investigated in the 2018 Report Card for Brazil, research gaps remain that, if addressed, would better define the grades. One gap was that daily behaviors were mostly self-reported in the Brazilian data, whereas, other countries have national evidence of direct measures. Thus, the next step for research in Brazil is to consider direct measures of these behaviors, clearly defining the cut points for activity and sedentary behavior.

Another gap was that Brazilian regions with less Postgraduate programs, such as the North, Northeast and Midwest, had less scientific information than South and Southeast regions. This highlights the need for government policies to stimulate research across the Brazilian territory.

**Conclusion**

In general, grades from the indicators in Brazil’s 2018 Report Card ranged from D- (sedentary behavior) to C (school). Only three out of ten indicators had grades of C+ or better. Thus, promoting physical activity and other health indicators among Brazilian children and adolescents is still a challenge for the country.
References


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