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## **Health and Well-Being Motivates Adolescents to be Physically Active**

Author (s)

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**Significance/Objectives:** Rates of physical activity are low among youth and decline during adolescence. This study examined motivations to be physically active in a sample of adolescent girls and boys. Of particular interest were motivations to be physically active among youth with identified risk factors for low physical activity including female gender, overweight status, and low perceived sport competence.

**Participants:** Participants included 12-14 year old girls (N = 92) and boys (N=110) from a middle school in rural central Pennsylvania.

**Methods:** Motivations to be physically active were assessed using the Activity Motivation Scale. Physical activity was measured using general levels of physical activity, overall inclination to be active, and sport participation. Perceived sport competence was measured by the Physical Self Description Questionnaire. In addition, participants' height and weight were measured by the school nurse and used to classify overweight status using CDC sex and age specific growth charts.

**Results:** Motivations to engage in physical activity included health and well-being, peer influence, parental influence, and weight control. Health and well-being was the greatest motivating factor to be physically active among all participants regardless of risk status, and was the only motivating factor that predicted higher levels of physical activity.

**Relevance:** This finding is informative in terms of developing interventions to promote physical activity among adolescents. Programs may not need to be catered to different risk groups in order to be effective because all groups may have in common a health and well-being motivation to be active.

