Power-Up: A Collaborative After-School Program to Prevent Obesity in African American Children

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What Is the Purpose of the Study?

• To assess whether a program promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity can be successfully implemented in the after-school setting, and to begin assessing its promise as a means to prevent childhood obesity.

What Is the Problem?

• Childhood obesity has risen significantly in recent decades, increasing the health risks for youth and young adults.
• Schools represent a key venue in which to address obesity, but academic pressures limit curricular changes and other activities during school hours.
• After-school programs are expanding nationwide, and represent a potential opportunity for promoting healthy nutrition and physical activity.

What Are the Findings?

• The Power-Up After-School program to prevent obesity was successfully integrated into the after-school setting at one Chicago public school using a collaborative, community-based participatory approach.
• Participating children lowered their degree of obesity on average.
• Girls decreased their prevalence of overweight/obesity more than boys.
• The heaviest children remained obese.

Who Should Care Most?

• School leaders.
• Public health leaders and community health care providers.
• Elected officials.
• Families of schoolchildren.

Recommendations for Action

• Work to incorporate opportunities for healthy nutrition and physical activity into after-school programs.
• Children who are already obese may need more intensive treatment.
• Larger scale studies are needed to better understand the value of this type of program in preventing childhood obesity.