Impact of Frequency of Physical Education on Obesity in Secondary School Students

Liana Webster

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania  
School of Graduate Studies and Research  
Department of Health and Physical Education

We hereby approve the thesis of

Liana Rita Webster

Candidate for the degree of Master of Education

__________________________________  _____________________________
Linda Klingaman, Ph.D.
Professor of Health and Physical Education
Advisor

__________________________________
Elaine Blair, Ph.D.
Health and Physical Education Department
Chairperson

__________________________________
Sharon Deutschlander, D.Ed.
Associate Professor of Health and Physical Education

__________________________________
Christine Black, Ph.D.
Professor of Health and Physical Education

ACCEPTED

__________________________________  _____________________________
Timothy Mack, Ph.D.
Dean
School of Graduate Studies and Research
This study examined the relationship between frequency of physical education classes and prevalence of overweight and obesity in secondary school students. This was done by comparing the body mass index (BMI) data of seventh through twelfth grade students in 33 school districts in Southwestern Pennsylvania of varying sizes, socioeconomic statuses, and frequencies of physical education. School districts were selected on the basis of their data being publicly available for each variable.

Analysis of the data showed a relationship between school size and percentage of overweight and obese students ($p = .007$), and also percentage of overweight and obese students and socioeconomic status ($p < .000$). There was no statistically significant relationship between frequency of physical education classes and number of overweight and obese students ($p = .608$), unless school size was controlled for, in which case there was a relationship ($p = .01$). No significant relationship was found between school size and frequency of physical education ($p = .736$).