

Wellbeing Warriors: A Randomized Controlled Trial Examining the Effect of Martial Arts Training on Mental Health Outcomes

Authors : Brian Moore, Stuart Woodcock, Dean Dudley

Abstract : Mental health problems have significant social and economic consequences; however, many individuals do not seek traditional assistance for mental health difficulties. Martial arts training may provide an inexpensive alternative to traditional psychological therapy. While limited research has suggested martial arts training may be an efficacious intervention, the validity and reliability of this are questionable given the small number of relevant studies and other methodological problems. The study examined the effects of 10-week martial arts-based psycho-social intervention which was evaluated using a randomized controlled trial. The intervention was delivered to 283 secondary school students, aged between 12-14 years, who were recruited from government and catholic secondary schools in New South Wales, Australia. The intervention was delivered in a group format onsite at participating schools and had an intervention dose of 10 x 50-60 minute sessions, once per week for 10 weeks. Data were collected at baseline, post-intervention, and 12-week follow-up. Results found a consistent pattern for strength based wellbeing outcomes. All primary and secondary measures relating to resilience and self-efficacy improved for the intervention group and declined for the control group. As these findings were derived from a robust design and rigorous evaluation, they provide valid and reliable evidence that martial arts-based psycho-social interventions can be considered as an efficacious method of improving strength and wellbeing outcomes.

Keywords : martial arts, mental health, resilience, self-efficacy

Conference Title : ICAP 2019 : International Conference on Applied Psychology

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : June 25-26, 2019