

Perception of Neighbourhood-Level Built Environment in Relation to Youth Physical Activity in Malaysia

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Abstract : Neighbourhood environment walkability on reported physical activity (PA) levels of students of Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) in Malaysia. Compared with previous generations, today's young people spend less time playing outdoors and have lower participation rates in PA. Research suggests that negative perceptions of neighbourhood walkability may be a potential barrier to adolescents' PA. The sample consisted of 200 USM students (to 24 years old) who live outside of the main campus and engage in PA in sport halls and sport fields of USM. The data were analysed using the t-test, binary logistic regression, and discriminant analysis techniques. The present study found that youth PA was affected by neighbourhood environment walkability factors, including neighbourhood infrastructures, neighbourhood safety (crime), and recreation facilities, as well as street characteristics and neighbourhood design variables such as facades of sidewalks, roadside trees, green spaces, and aesthetics. The finding also illustrated that active students were influenced by street connectivity, neighbourhood infrastructures, recreation facilities, facades of sidewalks, and aesthetics, whereas students in the less active group were affected by access to destinations, neighbourhood safety (crime), and roadside trees and green spaces for their PAs. These results report which factors of built environments have more effect on youth PA and they message to the public to create more awareness about the benefits of PA on youth health.

Keywords : fear of crime, neighbourhood built environment, physical activities, street characteristics design

Conference Title : ICHDFS 2016 : International Conference on Human Development and Family Studies

Conference Location : Paris, France

Conference Dates : November 21-22, 2016