

# **An exploration of reasons for low physical activity levels among children with moderate to severe asthma: informing the development of new interventions.**

## **Researchers**

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## **Background**

Physical activity levels among children are low and falling. This is especially a problem for children and young people with asthma since exercise is an important part of the asthma treatment regimen. In addition children with moderate to severe asthma may face specific asthma related barriers to increasing activity. The very existence of asthma can deter children, parents and school staff from engaging them in physical activity. Yet exercise is essential for their overall health and well-being. This study explores children's, family members' and schools' explanations for levels of physical activity.

## **Aims of Study**

- To explore reasons for low levels of exercise among children with asthma, and identify potential strategies to improve activity levels.
- In what ways do children's and parents' knowledge and beliefs about asthma influence the child's willingness to engage in physical activity?
- In what ways do key school staff's knowledge and beliefs about asthma influence their willingness to engage a child with asthma in physical activity?
- What are the roles of family members, key school staff and 'peers' in the initiation and implementation of exercise, and how do these vary?
- What help and support would children, parents and schools/teachers perceive as useful in carrying out recommended physical activity?

## **Methods of Working**

Children with asthma and their parents were interviewed in depth. Focus groups were held for peers, and relevant school staff. The study looked at patient identified problems, and perceived barriers to exercise among parents and schools, to form the basis of intervention programs aimed at initiating and sustaining increases in activity among children with asthma.

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