EFFECT OF AN AEROBIC-BASED PHYSICAL ACTIVITY PROGRAMME ON PHYSICAL FITNESS IN 10 – 15 YEAR-OLD GIRLS

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ABSTRACT

Decreasing tendencies of physical activity among adolescent girls are indicated as contributing to increased health risks in this age group. The purpose of this study was to determine whether a 10 week aerobic-based exercise programme performed twice a week, with a 30 minutes duration and an intensity level of 55 – 70% heart rate max would improve aerobic endurance, muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility and body composition of 10 – 15 year-old girls living in a farming community. The study involved girls (N=38) from two schools, living on nearby farms in the North West Province. Twenty subjects (n=20) participated in the aerobic-based programme, while eighteen (n=18) served as a control group. The FITNESSGRAMM assessed physical fitness while ACTICAL activity monitors were used to analyse the physical activity intensity level of the group. Co-variance of analysis (p < 0.05) showed significant group differences, indicating improvement in aerobic endurance, muscular strength and muscular endurance and improved tone as measured by the triceps skinfold after participating in the aerobic-based exercise programme. It is concluded that an aerobic-based exercise programme, conducted in a playful and enjoyable manner and according to guidelines set for health enhancement, can improve aerobic endurance, leading to increased physical activity among girls in their teenage years.

Key words: Physical activity, fitness, girls, rural, socio-economic status, health
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