CHAPTER 3: PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED SPORT AMONG URBAN MEXICAN YOUTH

Shannon R Siegel
Maria E Peña Reyes
Eyra E Cárdenas Barahona [†]
Robert M Malina

INTRODUCTION

Although the structure of youth sport programs varies among countries (De Knop et al., 1996), it is reasonably well established that significant numbers of children and adolescents throughout the world are involved in organized sport. Organized youth sport implies the presence of a coach, and regular practices and competitions during the course of a season. Sport offerings vary with cultural context, and it is generally assumed that European football (soccer) is the most popular youth sport in the world. In addition to organized sports, youth throughout the world participate in informal sport activities on a regular basis.

Many children begin participating in sport during childhood, often by 6 or 7 years of age, and participation rates increase with age during childhood. Rates subsequently decline during the transition into adolescence, i.e., after about 12-13 years of age, and through adolescence. The decline in youth sports participation after 12-13 years parallels declining rates of participation in physical activities in general across adolescence (Malina, 1995).

Given the age-related pattern of participation in organized sport, questions related to the motives of children and adolescents to participate, to discontinue participation and to return to participation often surface in the sport-related literature. This study considers motivation for sport in urban Mexican youth 9-18 years of age.

METHODS

A survey of the growth status, physical activity and sport participation of approximately 1100 urban Mexican school youth 9-18 years of age was conducted in 1998. A subsample of 591 youth completed questionnaires...