

Impact of a Wellbeing Intervention on Physical Activity Among Early Childhood Education Teachers



Isabella Dubrow, BS, Nada Goodrum, PhD, Angela Moreland, PhD
Medical University of South Carolina



Background

- Physical activity is beneficial to an individual's overall wellbeing, and has been shown to help reduce stress, and improve mood (Paluska and Schwenk, 2012)
- The impacts of living a physically active lifestyle have led to individuals having a higher satisfactory quality for their own life (Peluso & de Andrade, 2005)
- Research has shown that building wellbeing activities into the workplace enhances the attitudes and overall health of the individual workers (Chu et al., 2014)
- This study used a sample size of 349 early childhood education (ECE) teachers

Aims

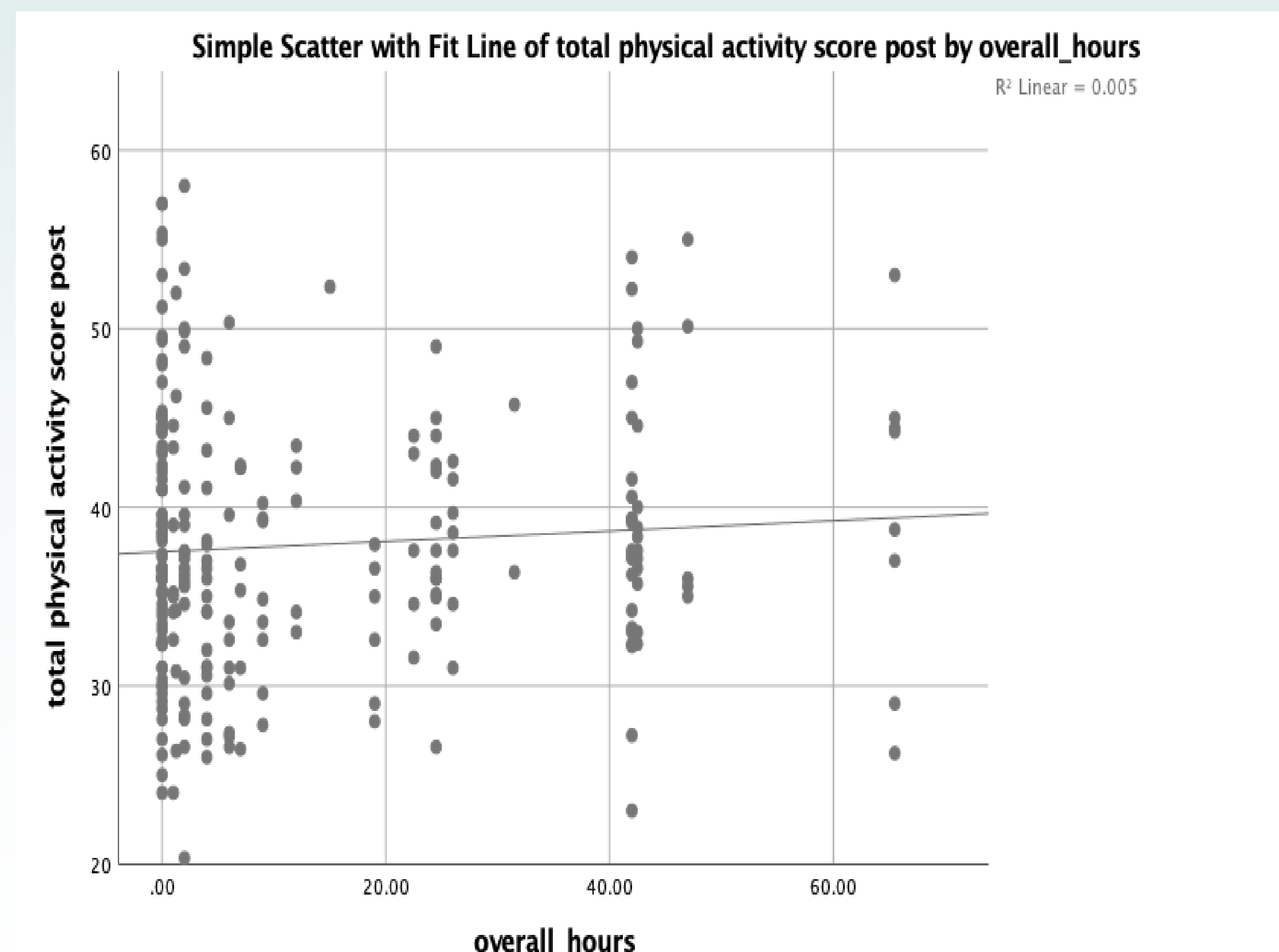
- The aim of this study was to examine whether engaging in a wellbeing program increased early childhood education teachers' physical activity

Methods

- Be Well Care Well (BWCW) is a statewide early childhood education (ECE) program, in South Carolina, designed to promote health and well-being of the ECE teachers
- Across the state, 28 early childhood education centers voluntarily participated in this study, and data was collected from 349 individual teachers
- Each teacher completed a questionnaire during enrollment in the program, and another once enrollment ended, which included their engagement in physical activity

Results

- The results of the Be Well Care Well program showed an increase in physical activity positively correlated to a higher number of hours of engagement in the program:
 - $\beta = .034$
 - $p = .008$
- At preintervention, 31% of teachers reported that they exercised regularly, and at postintervention, 37% of teachers reported they exercised regularly
- The change in the percent of teachers reporting regular exercise was not statistically significant
- This study did find a significant positive association between hours of engagement in the program and change in physical activity



Conclusions

- Findings from this study found that embedding a wellbeing program into the workplace significantly impacted preintervention to postintervention change in physical activity
- Not only did existence of the program make a difference to the participating teachers, but hours of engagement in the program increased overall physical activity
- Given the links between physical activity and overall health, these results suggest that a program to support teachers' engagement in physical activity may also improve overall wellbeing
- Overall, improving teacher well-being may have implications for enhancing teachers' ability to provide relationship-based care that better helps the children in their classrooms
- Some limitations include self-report data, generalizing to other parts of the country, convenience sample, and BWCW implications

References

- A. H. Y. Chu, D. Koh, F. M. Moy, F. Müller-Riemenschneider, Do workplace physical activity interventions improve mental health outcomes?, *Occupational Medicine*, Volume 64, Issue 4, June 2014, Pages 235–245, <https://doi.org/10.1093/occmed/kqu045>
- Paluska, S. A., & Schwenk, T. L. (2012, September 24). *Physical Activity and Mental Health*. Retrieved July 21, 2020, from <https://link.springer.com/article/10.2165/00007256-200029030-00003>.
- Peluso, Marco Aurélio Monteiro, & Andrade, Laura Helena Silveira Guerra de. (2005). Physical activity and mental health: the association between exercise and mood. *Clinics*, 60(1), 61-70. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1590/S1807-59322005000100012>

Acknowledgements

This work was supported in part by NIH grant R25 DA020537.