AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN PEDIATRIC OCD AND HEALTHY CONTROLS

Exercise has been shown to be an effective intervention for adult OCD. Previous research on college athletes showed OCD may be as common as 5.2%, more than doubled expected rates. However, it is unknown whether daily physical activity levels in pediatric OCD differ from that expected.

Objectives:
To investigate physical activity markers and related parental attitudes in OCD-affected children compared to matched healthy controls.

Methods:
30 OCD-affected youth and 28 age- and gender-matched controls participated. Parents of both groups completed the Anxiety Disorders Interview Schedule for DSM-IV which was administered by trained research staff. OCD patients received a diagnostic assessment by a child and adolescent psychiatrist and their parents completed the Children’s Yale-Brown Obsessive Compulsive Scale (C-YBOCS), a clinician-rated measure of OCD Severity. (Jaspers-Fayer, 2018).

Physical activity levels were measured by a Fitbit Flex. Participants wore the Fitbit for seven consecutive days and were included if they had at least four days of data (Jaspers-Fern, 2018). Parents completed a Physical Activity Attitudes and Beliefs Scale (PAABS), adapted from Hamilton et al 2014.

Results:
No significant differences between the two groups were identified with respect to daily mean number of steps taken [t(55)=0.98, p=0.33], sedentary minutes or PAABS scores. Average number of steps did not significantly differ by OCD severity. The mean BMI-for-Age Percentile of the OCD group was 49.22(SD=28.12) and the mean of the controls was 44.98(SD=33.80).

Conclusions:
OCD-affected children do not appear to differ with respect to physical activity level, BMI or related parental attitudes when compared to controls.