The Impact of Minimum Required Physical Education Time on Childhood Obesity Prevalence in Selected U.S. States

Lifetime Physical Activity LAB

GoPE! Global Observatory for Physical Education

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Introduction

- In 2024 the prevalence of childhood obesity in the United States was 19.7%.
- Physical education plays a significant role in adolescent wellbeing during school hours.
- Little is known about whether states that mandate a minimum required time for physical education have lower obesity rates among young people.

Aim

- To evaluate the impact of minimum required physical education (PE) time on childhood obesity rates in selected U.S. states (n = 25)

Methods

- Databases from the Global Observatory for Physical Education (GoPE!) and the State of Childhood Obesity (CDC) was used.
- Statistical analyses included summary of PE requirements across states (i.e., Physical education day/time, curriculum, and physical activity policies), as well as comparisons of obesity prevalence between states.

Results

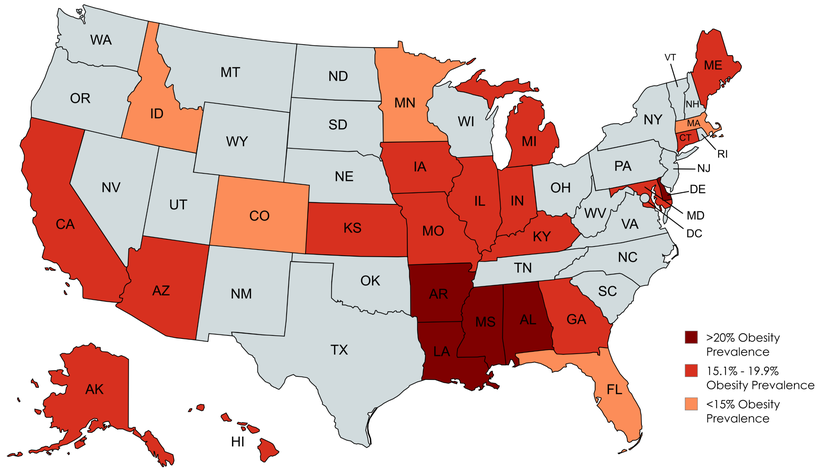

Figure 1: Prevalence of obesity by U.S states.

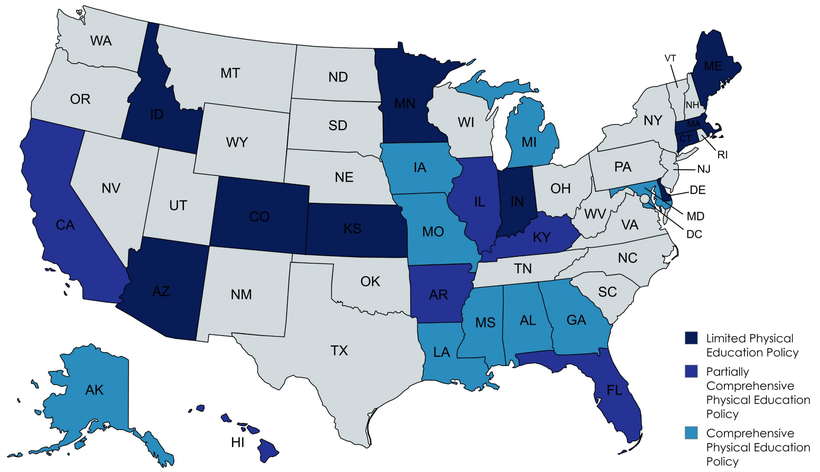

Figure 2: Physical Education policy status by U.S states.

- **States with no minimum required amount of <u>Physical Education time</u>**: Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Idaho, Indiana, Kansas, Maine, Massachusetts, and Minnesota.

- States with defined or partially defined weekly/daily **<u>Physical Education time</u>**: Alabama, Alaska, Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi and Missouri.

Limitations

- Did not explore the influence of other social drivers of health that may contribute to obesity prevalence
- The analysis was limited to only 25 states
- Future research could expand to include all 50 states and U.S. territories and examine a wider range of social drivers to better understand factors affecting childhood obesity prevalence.

Conclusions

- Many factors influence the prevalence of childhood obesity.
- It is important for future studies to consider investigating the impact of social drivers of health on childhood obesity prevalence to have a better understanding of why physical education may have varying levels of success among different states.

Acknowledgements

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