

ARTICLE REVIEWED

School-Based Health Education Research: Charting the Course for the Future

Benes, S., Boyd., K.M., Cucina, I., & Alperin, H.L. (2021). School-based health education research: Charting the course for the future. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 92(1), 111-126.

THE PROBLEM:

Health education has long been part of the preK-12 education system; however, recent national initiatives (e.g., Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child) have brought attention back to its importance in schools and specifically, its impact on children's well-being. Health education covers a range of topics with its goal being to instill skill development, behavior maintenance, or behavior change in students. Health education should be at least 40 hours of instruction for preK through grade 2 and eight hours per year for grades 3-12 (Joint Committee, 2007), yet this alone is not enough to meet the needs of children's well-being. In order to make an impact, health education must be supported with policies.



Research Summary:

The purpose of this paper was to bring awareness to key findings in health education and use them to impact policy and improve practices. The authors conducted a review of empirical research on school-based health education. From this review, they identified the following themes in the research: a) health education curriculum; b) instructional effectiveness; c) teacher preparation programs; and d) whole school initiatives.

Conclusion:

In this paper, the authors recognize the vital role research plays in advancing health education and identify areas that have been researched, as well as topics that need to be explored in the future. Specifically, the authors believe that research should focus on developing and implementing tools for measuring teacher preparation programs. In addition, it is recommended that scholars explore the effectiveness of health education curriculum programs.

Key Takeaway:

Health education plays a vital role in the well-being of children, yet this paper brings to light the lack of evidence and research on its overall effectiveness. In moving forward, it is recommended that health education fills the aforementioned research gaps and, as stated by the authors, advocates for policy change.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards. (2007). *National health education standards, achieving excellence* (2nd ed.). Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society.