children

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Physical Activity and Physical Fitness among Children and Adolescent

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Message from the Guest Editor

Physical activity benefits children and adolescents by increasing fitness. For teens, being physically active can provide several physical benefits, such as improving the cardiorespiratory system, building strong muscles and bones, controlling weight, reducing the risk of obesity, heart disease, cancer, type 2 diabetes, high blood pressure and osteoporosis, and increasing life span.

The brain has the ability to reorganize itself by forming new neural connections throughout one's life. Neuroplasticity allows the neurons (nerve cells) in the brain to compensate for injury and disease and to adjust their activities in response to new situations or to changes in their environment. Physically active children tend to achieve better academic results, as exercise helps with memory and thinking, improves attention, and can produce positive changes in brain structures and functions. Parts of the brain that control thinking and memory (the prefrontal cortex and medial temporal cortex) have a greater volume in physically active children versus children who are not active. Therefore, inactivity is killing our brains.