

# Active Living Research

Using Evidence to Prevent Childhood Obesity  
and Create Active Communities

## ARTICLE SUMMARY

February 2013

## Physical Activity among Low-Income Latino Youth

### Introduction

Residents of underserved urban neighborhoods often face serious challenges related to crime, violence, and incivilities (e.g. graffiti, vandalism, trash) that make it difficult for them to be physically active outdoors. We examined whether fear of crime, being victimized by or witnessing crime, perceived incivilities, and acculturation status (e.g. attachment to country of origin versus to United States) were related to physical activity and outdoor recreation among Latino youth and whether physical activity was related to the youth's likelihood of engaging in delinquent behaviors (e.g. stealing, sneaking into places, shoplifting, harming property).

### Key Findings

Overall, youth who were more fearful of crime were less physically active and engaged in less outdoor recreation. However, being the victim of or witnessing crime was not related to either physical activity or outdoor recreation. Youth who perceived more incivilities were less likely to engage in outdoor recreation. A surprising finding was that adolescents who engaged in more outdoor recreation were more likely to have higher levels of delinquency. When we examined whether there were any specific differences between boys and girls, we found that fear of crime was related to less physical activity among boys but not girls, while perceiving incivilities was related to less physical activity among girls but not boys.

### Methods

We surveyed 390 Latino youth living in Little Village, the largest Mexican neighborhood in Chicago, Ill. Youth ranged in age from 12 to 19 years and 80 percent were second-generation immigrants born in the United States.

### Other Findings

Youth who were more acculturated to the US were less likely to engage in outdoor recreation. However, acculturation was not significantly related to overall physical activity.

### Implications

Our findings suggest that girls may be more sensitive to neighborhood aesthetics than boys, while boys are more likely to be victims of violent crime or to be recruited into gangs, thus making crime a greater barrier to boys' physical activity. Finally, the relationship between outdoor recreation and delinquency suggests the need for interventions aimed at encouraging positive social behavior and healthy lifestyles among Latino youth.

### SOURCE

Roman, C.G., et al. (2013). Pathways to Outdoor Recreation, Physical Activity, and Delinquency Among Urban Latino Adolescents. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine*, 45(1Suppl): S151-S161.

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<http://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12160-012-9418-x>

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