

# Dance intervention improves self-rated health of girls with internalizing problems

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A dance intervention program improved the self-rated health of Swedish girls with internalizing problems, such as stress and psychosomatic symptoms, according to a report of a study published Online First by *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*.

Exercise is considered a strategy to prevent and treat depression in school-aged youth and has been shown to promote positive feelings, enhance confidence to cope with problems, and increase confidence and self-control, the authors write in the study background.

Ann Duberg, R.P.T., of the Centre for [Health](#) Care Sciences, Örebro County Council and Örebro University, Sweden, and colleagues conducted a randomized controlled intervention trial with 112 girls (ages 13 to 18 years) with internalizing problems who had repeat visits to the school nurse for [psychosomatic symptoms](#), such as pain in the head, stomach, neck, back and/or shoulder, and for persistent feelings of tiredness, being worried or being in low spirits.

In the study, 59 girls were assigned to the intervention group with dance classes twice weekly for eight months and 53 girls were assigned to the control group. Self-rated health (SRH) was the primary outcome measure and secondary measures were adherence to and experience of the intervention.

"The key finding in this study was that girls participating in the dance intervention improved their SRH more than those in the control group.

This effect remained four to eight months after the intervention had ended. The results also show high adherence and positive experience, which suggest that an intervention with dance can be suitable for adolescent girls with internalizing problems," the authors comment.

The dance intervention group improved their SRH more than the control group at all follow-ups, according to the study results. The results also indicate that 91 percent of the [girls](#) rated the dance intervention as a positive experience.

"According to these results, despite problems such as [stress](#) and psychosomatic symptoms (and other potential challenges in being an adolescent girl), dance can result in high adherence and a positive experience for the participants, which might contribute to sustained new healthy habits," the authors conclude.

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