

Active video games offer health benefit for children/Teens

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(HealthDay)—Active video games (AVGs) are a good alternative to sedentary behavior, and can provide health benefits comparable to laboratory-based exercise or field-based physical activity, according to research published online May 6 in *Obesity Reviews*.

Zan Gao, Ph.D., from the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, and colleagues conducted a meta-analysis to examine the effects of AVGs on children/adolescents' health-related outcomes. Data were extracted from 35 studies that met inclusion criteria. Comparisons were conducted for outcome measures in three categories: AVGs and sedentary behaviors, AVGs and laboratory-based exercise, and AVGs and field-based [physical activity](#).

The researchers found that AVGs had a large effect on [health outcomes](#) compared with sedentary behaviors. Comparing AVGs with laboratory-

based exercises, the effect sizes for physiological outcomes were marginal. Null to moderate effect sizes were seen in the comparison between AVGs and field-based physical activity. Equivalent [health benefits](#) were seen for AVGs and laboratory-based exercise or field-based physical activity.

"The findings have public health implications that can help inform health care stakeholders regarding AVG interventions among children/adolescents," the authors write. "Overall, given the fun component embedded in the games, AVGs are desirable as a promising addition to promote physical activity and health by replacing these sedentary behaviors."

More information: [Abstract](#)
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