

Understanding and Perceived Fluid Intake of Children in England and Ireland

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Abstract

Introduction

The Natural Hydration Council (2017) propose that children do not always recognise the early stages of thirst and this can mean that they are vulnerable to becoming dehydrated. Kenney and Chiu (2001) report that children rarely exhibit voluntary dehydration for activities lasting 45 minutes or less. Therefore, it could be proposed that children will not often exhibit the 'drive to drink' or express themselves as wanting a drink after physical education (PE) lessons, as most PE lessons in Ireland and England last approximately 40-45 minutes.

Materials and Methods

A total of 160 (England n= 80; Ireland n =80) children (age range 4-12 years) will be asked questions on the amount of times they drink in a day, how much they drink, when they drink and on their understanding of what they drink, when they drink and why they drink; particularly on days when they participate in PE. Results will be compared according to the total amount of fluids recommended according to the European Food Safety Authority. The data will be compared for age, gender and geographical location (Ireland vs England).

Results/Discussion

It is hypothesised that children in both countries do not understand when to drink to remain hydrated, before, within and after PE classes. The project will offer innovative perspectives on children's understanding of when they are driven to drink or not and inform practitioners and teachers to support children's physical activity, health and wellbeing allowing them to stay hydrated within, before and after physical education classes.