

*Summary: Culture and Physical Activity in Mississauga
From Research to Practical Solutions*



On December 08, 2009, twenty community stakeholders in Mississauga attended a workshop on Culture and Physical Activity. The purpose of the workshop was to understand the history of Healthy City Stewardship Centre and Get Active Mississauga, to inform stakeholders on research completed on culture and physical activity conducted by: Get Active Mississauga, University of Toronto Mississauga, and University of Guelph, and to gather stakeholder's perspectives on physical activity in Mississauga related to youth.

Three questions were posed to stakeholders:

1. Who are our priority population (s) in Mississauga even beyond the research that has just been presented? Identify specific groups or priority populations that could benefit from future research.
2. Why would you suggest investigating these populations?
3. Is there research your organization would benefit from?

Below is a summary of responses from stakeholders pertaining to each question.

Question 1: Who are our priority population (s) in Mississauga even beyond the research that has just been presented? Identify specific groups or priority population that could benefit from future research.

Varying populations were identified by stakeholders including:

- Parents
- Newcomers: youth, parents, siblings, younger children
- Teachers/Coaches
- All youth
- Girls and Boys: 12 – 18 years of age
- Black Communities: Caribbean, African, Jamaican, West Indian, young Black females
- South Asian: Afghan, Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Nepalese
- Hispanic: South and Central American
- White Skin: English, Irish, North American, Scottish
- Eastern European: Yugoslavian, Polish, Russian, Ukrainian, Czech
- Asian: Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Pilipino
- Mixed Races
- Muslim Females: Caribbean, Middle Eastern, South Asian, Indo Pakistani, African, Somalian
- Chinese Populations
- Low Income Pockets throughout Mississauga: Malton, Acorn Place, Colonial & Winston Churchill, Oak Ridges, Dixie Bloor
- Tween Group
- Children on Sports Teams
- Service Providers
- Youth ages 16-18

After stakeholders identified who they believe to be priority populations throughout Mississauga, they were then asked Question 2: Why would you suggest investigating these populations?

Some populations were discussed in greater depth than others and only populations discussed in-depth are outlined in this summary.

- It was determined that parents should be investigated as they can be barriers to levels of physical activity youth achieve. Further, an understanding of how parental ability to write or speak English would affect how health literate they would be, in turn affecting how health literate their families would be. Of specific interest to stakeholders is a general understanding of what it is like for new families in the community and how this influences children's physical activity levels from a young age.
- Newcomers to the country were identified by stakeholders as many stakeholders would like to understand how to convey "Canadian Ways" related to sports to this population. In general, it was mentioned, that new immigrants are very healthy when they arrive and 10 years later they are unhealthy. A need to uncover and understand why was of importance to stakeholders.
- Another population identified for further investigation was teachers and coaches as they deliver many messages to children and youth. Of interest to stakeholders was how teachers and coaches understand and deliver messages to various cultures and if cultural sensitivity was being observed.
- Individuals in poverty, specifically in reference to black communities were mentioned as a potential target population because poverty affects obesity and nutritional habits of children and youth. Service providers were mentioned for the same reason, due to the fact that they have an intimate relationship with poverty within their community and may have insight on how to address the issue through recreation based programming.
- Based on the Comprehensive Health Report (Region of Peel 2009), diabetes in the South Asian Community is on the rise. Since they are a high risk population it was noted that further information on the physical activity patterns of this population could be warranted.

Lastly, Question 2 was asked: Is there research your organization would benefit from?

Stakeholders listed the following research methods as beneficial to them and their organization: focus group studies, physical activity interventions, cultural diversity training evaluation, understanding segregated vs. targeted recreation programming, evaluation of workplace healthy living programs or places of worship healthy living programs.

Overall, based on the completed participant evaluations, the day was extremely rewarding. A brief glimpse of current research was provided to all stakeholders, which clearly caught their interest and provided a forum to discuss the importance of gathering Mississauga youth-based data. The group was able to provide valid, thought provoking information that will aid the research team in terms of future direction. The group also demonstrated an interest in understanding current research and assisting with future research. Current research will be presented in various forums in spring 2010.

If you are interested in a presentation of the current research or have questions or comments regarding this workshop or would like to participate in future research in this area please contact:

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Thank you for your interest, thoughts, and support for Healthy City Stewardship Centre's and Get Active Mississauga's Research on Culture and Physical Activity in Mississauga.