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Triple G (Girls Get Going): design of an intervention to foster and promote sport and physical activity among adolescent girls

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Introduction: Physical activity (PA) levels, particularly club sport and organised PA, decline during adolescence, especially for females. Inadequate links between school and community settings, and an over-emphasis on skills and competitive sport, are thought to contribute to this decline. This study aims to investigate the effect of a newly designed school-community links program on the PA level and wellbeing of adolescent girls. **Methodology:** The Triple G program methodology was developed during 2010, after consultation with Year 9 girls in eight schools in regional towns/cities across Victoria, in collaboration with state- and local-level representatives of tennis, football (soccer) and the YMCA. During 2011, the program is being trialled in Years 7-9 in the same schools. The program consists of school-based components for each of the three PA types/settings, focused on enjoyment and "game sense" pedagogical principles, followed by community club/centre-based components. Each school-based component consists of six lessons jointly taught by Physical Education teachers and coaches and/or representatives of community clubs/centres. Each student is exposed to two activities – non-competitive active recreation at the YMCA and either tennis or football. Students also complete self-management activities targeting cognitive and behavioural skills. Girls who enrol in the research study proceed into community-based programs after each school-based component. Resources have been developed for schools and clubs/centres, and professional development activities have been undertaken jointly by teachers and sport/club/centre coaches/representatives. The research methodology is a cluster-randomised controlled trial. Eight intervention schools were recruited, randomly selected within constraints of availability of tennis, football and YMCA facilities and personnel. Eight control schools were selected and recruited, matched to intervention schools with regard to community demographic profiles and facilities. Control schools will be provided with all program resources at the conclusion of the study. Baseline, follow-up and process evaluation data are being collected via self-completion participant questionnaires, school and community facilities audits, lesson evaluation forms, teacher round-table discussions, attendance records, and post-intervention interviews with selected program deliverers and participants. Participant surveys and facilities audits will also be conducted in control schools/communities. **Results:** As of March 2011, 969 completed baseline student questionnaires have been returned, 618 from seven of eight intervention schools and 351 from seven of eight control schools. Baseline and process data will be analysed during 2011. **Conclusion:** This innovative study is applying new strategies to the problem of declining PA in adolescent girls. Participant uptake has satisfied design targets. Preliminary baseline and process findings will be presented.