

## COMPARISON OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN URBAN AND RURAL GREEK CHILDREN 12 YEARS OLD\*

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the impact of the place of residence on physical activity in 12-years old schoolchildren. The sample consisted of 360 boys (189 from urban areas and 171 from non-urban) aged  $12.3 \pm 0.42$  years and 247 girls (125 urban areas and 122 from non-urban) aged  $12.3 \pm 0.43$  years. The participants were assessed for anthropometrical characteristics, biological maturation (Tanner, 1962) and last year leisure physical activity using a questionnaire (Aaron, et al., 1993). To investigate the effect of residence in physical activity the Mann-Whitney U test was used. To compare the biological maturity of children in urban and rural areas  $\chi^2$  test was used. To compare the anthropometric characteristics of children in urban and rural areas the t-test for independent samples was applied. There were no differences between urban and rural children in Vigorous Physical Activity (VPA) and Total Physical Activity (TPA), but Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity (MVPA) was higher in rural than urban areas among children. Biological maturity had no statistically significant differences in contrast, boys from urban areas showed higher values in body mass, the body mass index and sum of skinfolds. These results can be used by health program developers to focus their intervention in specific pediatric populations (urban boys).

**Key words:** biological maturity, children, physical activity, rural, urban.

\*An extended Summary Plus English version is freely available at [www.hellenicjsport.com](http://www.hellenicjsport.com)