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Participation in Boys & Girls Clubs Of Winnipeg is Associated With Health, Social and Education Outcomes Among Metis Children

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Introduction

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Winnipeg (BGCW) provide out-of-school programs to children and youth living in low-income neighbourhoods in Winnipeg, Canada. These programs aim to set participants on a path to success by supporting healthy behaviours, academic achievement and social skills. Metis children and youth make up a substantial proportion of BGCW participants, but there are few empirical data available on how the programs influence health, social and education outcomes in this population.

Objectives and Approach

We linked BGCW attendance records for all Manitoba children born 1987-2010 to the individual-level administrative health, social and education data in the population-based Data Repository at the Manitoba Centre for Health Policy in Winnipeg. The comparison group of non-participants was matched on age and neighbourhood of residence. We narrowed the cohort to Metis participants by linking to datasets containing Metis identifiers. Education outcomes were examined using a generalized additive model, and health and justice system outcomes with a time-to-event model, adjusted for socioeconomic status, mother's mental health and age at first birth, and involvement in the child welfare system.

Results

1,664 Metis children and youth participated in BGCW from 2005-2016. The comparison group comprised 9,248 Metis children and youth. Greater BGCW participation was associated with higher likelihood of performing well in grade 3 numeracy (boys and girls) and grade 7 student engagement (boys only), but not other education outcomes (grade 3 reading, grade 7 mathematics, grade 7/8 reading/writing, or graduating high school). Greater BGCW participation was also associated with lower risk of becoming involved with the justice system (i.e., lower risk of being charged with a crime) and with lower risk of teen pregnancy.

Conclusion / Implications

Participation in BGCW programs may contribute to improved health, justice and education outcomes for Metis children and youth in Winnipeg.

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