

[IMAGE]

## Happier With Exercise

By Editorial Staff

Children may seem like they're always smiling, but the reality – as all parents know – is that children and happiness is complicated. In fact, many children experience anxiety and depressive symptoms that are only recently being acknowledged. That's the bad news; the good news is that they can benefit from getting more *exercise*, suggests research.

In a review study designed to evaluate the impact of physical activity interventions on depressive symptoms in children and adolescents (average age: 14 years), researchers reviewed 21 studies involving nearly 2,500 participants. Average duration of the ("aerobic-type") physical activity program: 22 weeks. Average frequency: 2-5 days per week, with three days per week the most common frequency. Most interventions were supervised. Physical activity interventions reduced depression symptoms to a greater extent than controls (no treatment, waiting list, education/attention control, or treatment as usual). Findings appear in *JAMA Pediatrics*.

kids exercise - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark As the review authors emphasize, "Depression is the second most prevalent mental disorder among children and adolescents, yet only a small proportion seek or receive disorder-specific treatment. ... [In fact,] only 50% of children and adolescents with depression receive an adequate diagnosis before reaching adulthood." If your child is displaying symptoms of depression, don't ignore it. Talk to your doctor for more information.

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