

media release



HMRI @ the University of Newcastle

Tuesday 16 March 2010

Study highlights benefits of resistance training for adolescents

A study from the University of Newcastle has shown that adolescents can benefit from resistance training programs.

Dr David Lubans from the Faculty of Education and Arts and Associate Professor Robin Callister from the Faculty of Health, have evaluated the impact of a program involving free weights and an elastic tubing resistance training tool known as a Gymstick.

The two-month study of more than 100 Year 9 and 10 students in Newcastle is the first to measure the effects of elastic tubing resistance training in adolescents.

“Our findings have important implications for the promotion of muscular fitness in this age group,” Dr Lubans said.

“Increasing physical activity levels in children and adolescents has emerged as a global health priority.

“In Australia, approximately 25 per cent of youth are overweight or obese and approximately 30 per cent do not meet the national physical activity recommendations¹.

“Historically, resistance training has not been recommended for children and adolescents due to the perceived threat of injury and the belief it could stunt linear growth.

“The results from this study actually show the feasibility and benefits of resistance training for adolescents.”

The students used either free weights or the elastic tubing resistance training tool twice a week for eight weeks and improved their body composition and muscular strength.

Boys improved both upper and lower body strength, while girls achieved significantly larger improvements in lower body strength.

Dr Lubans’ research has been published in the journal *Preventive Medicine*.

Dr Lubans’ and Associate Professor Callister’s research is conducted in collaboration with the Hunter Medical Research Institute’s (HMRI) Cardiovascular Research Program. HMRI is a partnership between the University of Newcastle, Hunter New England Health and the community.

¹ Department of Health and Ageing. 2007 Australian National Children’s Nutrition and Physical Activity Survey - Main Findings.

Picture opportunity: Dr Lubans and David Pitfield from St Pius X High School at Adamstown will be working with students **today, Tuesday 16 March, at 11am.**

For interviews: Dr Lubans is available for interviews from 10am on 02 4921 2049 or 0406 627 011.

Media contact: Keeley O’Mara at the University of Newcastle on 4921 6856 or 0448 898 813.

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