

'Drive to drink!'

Kristy Howells¹ and Tara Coppinger²

¹Canterbury Christ Church University ²Cork Institute of Technology

This paper will examine children's understanding of when to drink. The Natural Hydration Council (2017) proposed that children do not always recognise the early stages of thirst and this can mean that they are vulnerable to becoming dehydrated. Kenney and Chiu (2001) earlier found that children rarely exhibit voluntary dehydration for activities lasting 45 minutes or less. Therefore, it could be proposed that children will not often exhibit the 'drive to drink' or express themselves as wanting a drink after physical education lessons, as most physical education lessons in England and Ireland last approximately 40-45 minutes.

Previous research has considered what children are drinking at mealtimes, (UK National Diet and Nutrition Survey) and focused on the water consumption of children during secondary aged children. A study in France (Bonnet et al. 2012) suggested that more than two-thirds of children aged 9-11 years were not drinking enough. This paper focuses on young children, and their understanding of when to drink in relationship to physical activity and physical education classes.

It is hypothesised in this paper that children do not understand when to drink to remain hydrated, before, within and after physical education classes. This paper will examine the children's understanding and make comparisons to how much children should drink according to the total amount of fluids recommended for the different ages according to the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA). The results will also make comparisons between ages, gender and location of the children and analyse if there are similarities or differences between the two countries.

The paper will offer innovative perspectives on children's understanding of when they are driven to drink or not and help practitioners and teachers to support the children's physical activity, health and wellbeing allowing them to stay hydrated within, before and after physical education and physical activity.

References

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