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Investigating Physiological Determinants of Mental Health in Children with Cerebral Palsy

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Investigating Physiological Determinants of Mental Health in Children with Cerebral Palsy

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Fifty-seven percent of children with cerebral palsy (CP) experience mental health symptoms including symptoms of anxiety and depression. Although CP is non progressive, secondary conditions like pain, fatigue and sleep disturbances can have progressive effects on an individuals' functional abilities. Our study aimed to understand how these factors and physical activity impact mental health in children and youth with CP. Identifying factors that contribute to mental health symptoms may prevent the maintenance of these issues into adulthood. From our observational study, we found that these risk factors were predictive of mental health behaviours including behavioural, depressive and anxiety related symptoms in youth with CP. This study will help develop evidence-based interventions to treat these factors and have the potential to inform clinicians on the determinants of mental health outcomes. Individualized, targeted interventions can be developed to address the modifiable risk factors that threaten the wellbeing of children with CP.