

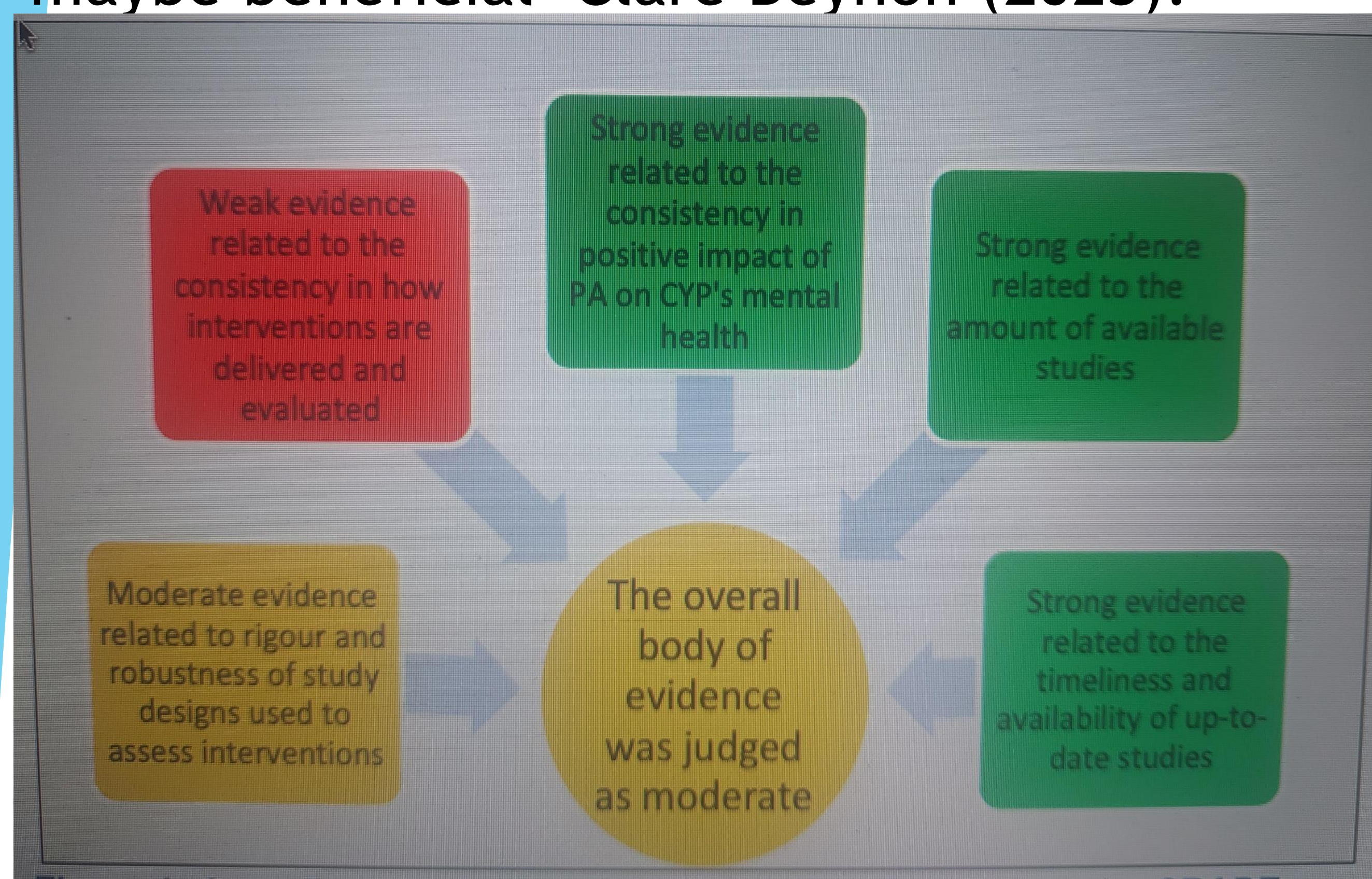
Physical activity and adolescents mental health and wellbeing

Introduction

It is common knowledge that adolescents and people of all ages benefit from a healthy balanced lifestyle which includes physical activity . This poster will present case studies highlighting the evidence to support this contention the studies will include key findings on physical activity of different types and the connection between mental health and wellbeing some of which are:

- Aerobic exercise .
- Aerobic plus exercise
- sport involving physical activity
- Physical activity within group settings
- Physical activity to moderate to high intensity

The results of a Welsh study of the relationship between obesity and mental health in adolescents found a very small link between obesity and mental health, but suggested further study to identify key area's of mental health support that maybe beneficial Clare Beynon (2023).



Discussion

The first study by Stubbs B. et al (2017) summarized many benefits of physical activity for people with mental illness. For example, physical activity can have a positive impact on health conditions experienced by people with mental illness. Depression can be alleviated by structured exercise and social skills and connectivity can be improved by physical activities which in group settings can also tackle loneliness. Another study entitled “active lives” found that for 16-24 year olds there is a positive association between activity levels and mental health. Young adults with a mental health condition who are more active were reported as having less anxiety, greater life satisfaction, and happiness scores, and higher levels of trust in others.

According to a study entitled physical activity exercise, and mental health of healthy adolescents by Ranz et al (2024). The mental health of individuals involving economic social biological and enviromental factors. Changes during adolescents lead to young people experiencing significant vulnerability to mental heath problems.

Aerobic exercise has been found to have a moderate effect on depression. Aerobic plus resistance exercise however has been found to have strong effects on symptoms of depression. There is strong evidence that sport involving physical activity has a positive effect on diagnosed mental health problems of adolescents. Physical activity within group settings was found to have strong effects on mental health when compared to activity within one to one settings which were found to have weak effects on mental health. Physical activity to moderate to high intensity was found to be the most effective in treating depression in adolescents Smith A. et al., (2024).

A study by Sarah Louise Bell et al (2019) found no strong evidence that physical activity of itself can not be directly associated with better mental wellbeing in adolescents. However an improvement in emotional problems was found in 15-16 year olds, suggesting the possibility of improvement in symptoms of depression and anxiety. A large number of adolescents are thought to suffer poor mental well being but not actual mental illness. Studies have been too vague to identify any specific cause or effect. Some relationship was found between physical activity and cognitive function. Also differences were found in the mental effect of physical Activities such as team sport as apposed to physical activity such as walking to school. Clearly studies are required that distinguish between types of physical activity, in order that any measurable benefit can be shown to result.

In conclusion the common theme to emerge from studies undertaken is that physical activity of itself can not be reliably associated with any observable improvement or deterioration in the mental health of adolescents. However it is commen knowledge and well known from many studies that physical activity such as exercise is the direct cause of positive health benefits. And a similar relationship exists between physical health and mental health. It would be reason studies are required when physical activity is pleasurable or team sport, as out of nec



Bell S.L. et al (2019) The Relationship Between Physical Activity, Mental Wellbeing and Symptoms of mental health Disorder in Adolescents: a cohort study

Beynon Claire (2023) Association Between Children living with obesity and Mental health problems; a data- analysis of the Welsh Health Survey UK. BMC Public health

Smith A. et al., (2024) Children and Young People's Mental Health and Physical Activity; an independent review commissioned by Sport England

Stubbs B et al., (2017) An Examination of the Relationship Between Physical Activity and Mental Health in Adolescents

Ranz, E.R. et al., (2024) Physical Activity, Exercise, and Mental Health of Healthy Adolescents: A Review of the Last Five Years