

research snapshot

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Barriers Exist for Newcomers to Access Spaces for Sport and Recreation

What is this research about?

Participating in sports and physical activity is important for our health. However, other social benefits exist as well. Spaces for physical activity are also spaces for community. It allows people to integrate and engage with their communities. But there is not an equal opportunity for all people to access and participate in these spaces. A person's health is affected by their socioeconomic status, especially if they are an immigrant. Multiple factors influence a person's ability to be physically active and healthy, including: gender, race, income, and status.

What did the researcher do?

The researcher looked at how Multiculturalism was incorporated in sport organizations and recreational centres. In particular, her focus looked at the barriers for sports and recreation for newcomers in Toronto. The researcher also emphasized on how these barriers were different for everyone, depending on one's gender, race, income or neighbourhood.

What you need to know:

Newcomers and other groups experience barriers from being active in sports and physical activity. This is a result of institutional racism. Many spaces do not address the varied and distinct needs of different groups, despite multiculturalism policies in Canada.

What did the researcher find?

Institutional racism created barriers for newcomers and ethno-cultural groups. The researcher found that organizations like Sports Canada have no policy to deal with social inclusion or racial and gender equity. Cities like Toronto celebrated their multicultural population, but the facilities, programs and services they provided did not meet the needs of varied communities. There is very little research that exists on the use of sport and recreation for creating spaces of community and inclusion for all.

The researcher challenged the assumption that newcomers do not participate in sport or recreation because of their culture. Rather, she looked at the way existing services and programs that existed are based on Western

games and activities. The researcher suggested that more policies should be created to make sports and recreation more accessible and culturally meaningful for newcomers. Research should also integrate communities in the process of improving access, and put value behind experience rather than traditional methods.

How can you use this research?

Researchers in the fields of sport or health may find this work useful, as it looks at the relationship between health and various social factors. Service providers and NGO's may also find this research helpful in identifying problems around accessibility for different communities. This research also offers important consideration for policy on all levels of government.

About the Researcher

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Keywords

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