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Title of Paper: The Impact of Psychosocial Well-being on the Health Behaviours of Rural

Children

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Abstract:

***Purpose:***The purpose of this mixed method’s study was twofold: 1) To determine the relationship between psychosocial health (happiness, social relationships) and the health and health behaviors (weight status, physical activity, diet) of children living in rural Saskatchewan, Canada and 2) To discover, from the children’s perspective, their perception about the influence of the rural environment on health behaviors and psychosocial health.

***Methods and Procedure:*** Students in Grades 4 - 6 (9 to 12 yrs) completed 4 questionnaires: 1) the *Piers-Harris 2*; 2) the *Food Frequency Questionnaire*; 3) the *Faces Scale*; and 4) the *Physical Activity Questionnaire for Older Children.* Heights and weights were measured to assess BMI (Body Mass Index) and determine weight status (healthy weight versus unhealthy weight). The study sample was also divided into two subgroups: an *Accelerometer* Group and a *Photovoice* Group. Children in the Accelerometer Group wore accelerometers for one week for further assessment of physical activity. Children in the Photovoice Group were given cameras to take pictures and share their perceptions of their rural environment that influence their physical and psychosocial health.

***Study Relevance:***  This research is in progress with results available by June 2011. This study comes at a crucial time when the present and future health of children is significantly threatened with physical inactivity, poor diet, and the obesity epidemic. Considering the views and experiences of children can help decision-makers gain an understanding of the issues children encounter in their lives and provide a way forward that honours these issues. By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, different domains of children’s well-being (i.e. physical, psychosocial, rural environment) can be explored. Results will contribute to existing literature on the health of rural children and will provide a foundation for future interventions aimed at preventing obesity and improving the health of rural Canadian children.