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Traditional Indian Games and its Implications for Developing Locomotor Skills: A Review

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Introduction: The development of neuromotor skills is largely dependent on primary muscle activities and the joints involved in performing basic movements. These movements known as Fundamental movement skills are classified into object control skills and locomotor skills. The attainment of these skills can be through various interventions focusing on improving physical activities including play. Limited studies have been identified pertaining to the effect of traditional games on Fundamental movement skills which include those from the cultures of Iran, Cuba, and Malaysia. However, limited information could be retrieved regarding the influence of traditional Indian games to develop locomotor skills.

Objective: The objective of this review is to understand the implications of traditional Indian games on locomotor skills in typically developing children

Design/Method: All the articles referring to traditional games and its influence on locomotor skills were systematically searched from scientific databases which revealed limited published studies. A search across the grey literature disclosed a few literatures which were then reviewed.

Results: The identified nine traditional Indian games help in refining skills such as teamwork, co-operation, goal attainment, build character, provide an outlet for expression and thereby improve the performance. It allows children to experiment, explore, develop and maintain a rich and flexible behavioural, cognitive, social and emotional repertoire. The games thereby provide contentment by activating the frontal cortex, amygdala and the insula. All the aspects of locomotor skills such as Running, Galloping, Hopping, Leap, Horizontal jump, skip and slide are the primary focus of these games. The maturation of these skills is based on the dynamic systems theory, meaning, movement behaviour is the result of interaction between constraints from a specific task, learner with given characteristics, and the environment. Games such as Lagori, Gend-tadi, kith-kith helps gain a quicker response time, eye hand co-ordination, inter limb co-ordination, perception and dynamic balance. Dongar-pani helps augment action production, correction and comprehension and depth perception. kokla-chapakki and Nalku-mooli-aata amplify body percept, balance, motor planning and execution. Vishamrut, kho-kho, and Sakhali augments free running skills. In addition to these benefits, strength and endurance is also enhanced.

Conclusion: Traditional Indian games could potentially have an influence on developing locomotor skills in typically developing children. An exposure to such games can thus assist in enhancing motor skill proficiency. The implication of the same can be studied amongst those children who are atypically developing.