“You Should be More Active”: Social Control Changes Based on Parents’ Desire
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Purpose
This study examined whether parents’ desire for their children to be more active would lead to parents use of social control on a week-to-week basis.

Methods
- **Participants**: 55 children (ages 2-18) with 49 mothers & 6 fathers, 22 boys & 33 girls, mean age 6.7 years (SD=4.3)
- **Procedures**: Completed two online surveys a week apart
- **Measures**: 
  - **Social control**: 9 items assessing 3 subscales 
    - Positive SC (3 items): Encourage your child 
    - Collaborative SC (4 items): Offer to be active with them/her 
    - Negative SC (2 items): Nag your child
  - **Desire for child’s PA to change**: 1 (not at all) to 7 (very often)

Key Finding
Parents who want their child to keep the same level of physical activity appear to decrease in their use of social control especially positive and collaborative social control.

Results
- **Analysis**
  - MANOVA was performed
  - Desired child to increase 
    - 19 children: 11 boys, 8 girls
  - Desired child to stay the same 
    - 36 children: 11 boys, 25 girls

- **Findings**
  - Desired child to stay the same 
    - SC has been related to behavior and affect across a variety of health behaviors: smoking, managing diabetes, physical activity
  - Desired child to increase 
    - SC use increased
  - Desired child to decrease 
    - SC use decreased

Discussion
- **These findings provide support for the importance of parents’ desire for their child to perform PA**
  - Supports conceptual definition of prompting a desired behavior
  - Supports other research that reported desire for change was associated with spouse’s use of social control

- **Limitations**
  - Grouping is based on parents’ perceptions and other factors
  - Sample size of 55 may be underpowered as MANOVA

- **Future Directions**
  - Explore with more diverse, larger samples (e.g., fathers)
  - Explore factors that are associated with parents desiring their child to be more active
    - Do they base it on activity level? Time of year?
    - Follow parents over a longer period of time to observe fluctuations in SC use, PA and other related constructs

- **Strengths**
  - Prospective design allows changes in use to be examined over time
  - Parents of a wide range of ages were included

- **Limitations**
  - Unclear on influences or desires prior to these assessments
  - Did those who wanted their child to stay the same previously want their child to increase?
  - Sample size of 55 may be underpowered as MANOVA only approached significance
  - Grouping is based on parents’ perceptions and other factors (e.g., gender) associated with both desire and SC use not examined in this study must be considered