

Jenny Veitch¹, Anna Timperio¹, Jo Salmon¹, Shaun Bangay¹, Benedicte Deforche²

1 Deakin University, Burwood, Australia

2 Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium

Little is known about specific park features that may encourage adolescents to visit or be physically active in parks. This research involved two studies using novel methodologies to identify critical characteristics of parks that are associated with adolescents' use of parks and willingness to be physically active within these settings. Secondary schools located in low, mid and high SES areas of metropolitan Melbourne, Australia were recruited and students aged 13-16 years were invited to participate. Study 1 involved the development of a computer application that included 44 images of park features. The application was downloaded to iPads, and enabled participants to rate each image individually according to how likely they would be to visit and be active in the park depicted in the image using a 10-point Likert scale. To obtain more detailed insights, participants used symbols to indicate characteristic(s) in each image that had the greatest positive and negative influence on their rating. Study 2 involved choice-based conjoint analyses to provide a ranking of the ten park features identified in Study 1 as being most likely to encourage visitation. Ninety-nine adolescents (mean age 13.3 years (SD=0.87), 52.6% female) participated in Study 1 and 95 adolescents participated in Study 2. Physically challenging and adventurous play and sports equipment such as large slides, swings, flying foxes and table tennis tables are likely to encourage adolescents to visit and be active in parks. Skate bowls, steps, toilets, signage with rules, and graffiti are likely to discourage park visitation.