**EXERCISE**

**Pokémon app craze gets children back on their feet**

Hunting Jigglypuffs and pursuing Pikachu is encouraging youngsters to exercise.

The Pokémon Go craze is getting youngsters back on their feet, says Dr Margaret McCartney in the BMJ.

The GP has been out and about in Glasgow with her children, spotting Swellows, finding Flygons and locating Lunatones – a process which, she says, has turned streets into ‘a reclaimed playground in which to have interconnected fun’.

While scientific evidence of the app being beneficial has yet to appear, the fact that young players are getting out and about is welcome. ‘Increased physical activity is a tantalising side effect,’ she writes, despite Pokémon Go not being marketed as a health app, and players having no particular motivation to get fit.

Commentators have linked the game to counteracting depression, solving the obesity epidemic (one UK player reportedly walked 225km and lost 2 stone) and easing the type 2 diabetes burden.

‘The bad-for-you camp has stories of Pokémon hunters being rescued from the sea by emergency services and being robbed of their phones at gunpoint in the US.’

She concludes: ‘The possibilities for apps to make the streets an active, reclaimed playground in which to have interconnected fun are boundless. Game on!’

+ McCartney M (2016) Observations: Game on for Pokémon Go. BMJ. doi: 10.1136/bmj.i4306

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**Locked doors do not help patient well-being in mental health units**

A report in The Lancet Psychiatry suggests locked-door wards are ineffective in reducing patient suicide attempts or eliminating unauthorised absence.

On the contrary, a 15-year German study of 143,000 patients concludes that fewer restrictions create a more therapeutic atmosphere and promote better health outcomes.

While the authors caution that the findings may not apply to all countries, they say the study challenges general preconceptions.

By analysing data from 21 hospitals from 1998-2012, the report – put together by researchers at the Universitäts Psychiatrische Kliniken Basel in Switzerland – concludes that rates of attempted suicide and completed suicide did not differ significantly between hospitals with an open-door policy and those without. Similarly, absconding rates (with or without return) did not improve in hospitals with an open-door policy.

Lead author Dr Christian Huber says: ‘[Locked-door policies] probably impose a more oppressive atmosphere, which could reduce effectiveness of treatments and may even motivate patients to abscond.’

Professor Tom Burns of Oxford University adds: ‘Across western psychiatry we are witnessing a shift to ever more compulsion and control which might indicate a more worrying trend; a neglect of establishing trusting relationships with troubled and severely mentally ill individuals.’


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