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ACTIVE TRANSPORT AMONG KIWI ADOLESCENTS IN THE URBAN JUNGLE: PERCEPTIONS OF SAFETY AND CONVENIENCE

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Background Active transport (AT) is an effective way for increasing physical activity in adolescents. While individual, family, social, and safety factors influence transport choices to school, less is known about factors influencing means of transport within the urban setting.

Aims This study compares individual, household, and social factors associated with AT (walking and cycling) versus MT (motorised transport) to parks and playgrounds, city centre, and sport and recreational facilities among urban adolescents in Dunedin, New Zealand.

Methods In 2009, 1182 secondary school students (age: 14.2 \pm 1.2 years; 53.6% boys) from 10 urban schools completed the

online Otago School Students Lifestyle Survey. Data collected included sociodemographic and behavioural information, parental perceptions of safety, social support for AT, and usual mode of transport to parks and playgrounds, city centre, and sport and recreational facilities.

Results Most students used AT to parks and playgrounds (70.5%), but less to city centre (20.5%) and sport and recreational facilities (19.8%). Overall, 46.5% of students met physical activity guidelines and 37.4% met screen time guidelines. Parental concern for safety was the greatest barrier for AT to parks and playgrounds (AT:4.0% vs MT:12.1%), $p<0.001$). Bus was perceived as a more convenient transport option to city centre (AT:61.5% vs MT:78.8%, $p=0.001$) and safer transport option to sport and recreational facilities (AT:53.1% vs MT:67.6%, $p=0.001$).

Contribution to the Field Adolescents are most likely to use AT to visit parks and playgrounds, while MT is perceived as safer and more convenient for accessing city centre and sport and recreational facilities.