

Children less fit than their parents were as kids

By Michelle Roberts, BBC

Many children cannot run as fast as their parents could when they were young, a study of global fitness says.

Experts say the work – being presented at the American Heart Association’s annual meeting – suggests children’s fitness levels may be declining.

Researchers analyzed data spanning 46 years and involving more than 25 million children in 28 countries.

On average, children today run a mile 90 seconds slower than did their counterparts 30 years ago, they said.

Across nations, cardiovascular endurance – gauged by how far children can run in a set time – has dwindled consistently by about 5% every decade, according to the findings.

The decline is seen in boys and girls and across all ages from nine to 17 years, and is linked to obesity, with some countries faring worse than others.

Lead researcher Dr Grant Tomkinson of the University of South Australia’s School of Health Sciences said: “In fact, about 30 percent to 60 percent of the declines in endurance running performance can be explained by increases in fat mass.”

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