Abstract
Problem  Less than one-fourth of children reach their recommended 60-minutes of daily physical activity. Inactivity can result in poor academic performance; whereas physical activity stimulates brain functions responsible for regulating comprehension and attention, release of brain chemicals to improve learning, and enhances neurogenesis resulting in better cognition. The purpose of this quality improvement project was to evaluate the Take 10 exercise program in a rural, Midwestern elementary school fifth grade classroom.

Methods  An observational, descriptive design with a purposeful sample of fifth-grade students in a rural elementary school. Grades in math, science, and reading were examined the semester before (quarter 1 [Q1]) and after (quarter 2 [Q2]) the Take 10 program was implemented.

Results  Of 22 students (N=22), males (n=11) and females (n=11) were equal, and an increase in scores of four tests occurred. The mean math test one score increased from 67.32 (SD=11.53) in Q1 to 74 (SD=13.49) in Q2 (t (21) = -3.46, p = .002); for Q1 math test three the mean was 80.36 (SD=12.30) and Q2 was 90.45 (SD=9.57) (t (21) = -3.44, p = .002); the mean score for Q1 science test two was 72.57 (SD=16.80) and Q2 was 81.71 (SD=11.67) (t (20) = -2.66, p = .015); mean reading test one score increased from 91.36 (SD=11.67) in Q1 to 96.59 (SD=7.14) in Q2 (t (21) = -4.39, p < .001).

Implications for practice  Promoting physical activity during the school day may improve some test scores, contributing to a healthier cognitive development in children.