

Exercise Inception Even Late in Life Cuts Cardiovascular Risks

NEW YORK (Reuters Health) Mar 11 - Adopting a regular exercise routine for the first time later in life, reduces the development of metabolic risk factors for cardiovascular disease, Canadian researchers report in the March issue of *Diabetes Care*.

"Our next step," lead investigator, Dr. Robert John Petrella, said in an interview with Reuters Health, "is to expand the impact into the broader community."

In particular, Dr Petrella and colleagues at the University of Western Ontario, London examined the effect of chronic exercise training on the development of metabolic markers of cardiovascular disease. Two cohorts of previously sedentary healthy adults between the ages of 55 and 75 years were studied.

One group initiated regular supervised physical exercise training and the other acted as a sedentary control group. Baseline fitness levels were similar between groups.

At 10 years, complete data were available for 161 active and 136 sedentary subjects. Withdrawal was mostly due to failure to adhere to the exercise program in the active group and poor physical health in the sedentary group.

Sedentary patients exhibited significantly more metabolic abnormalities than active patients. Active subjects demonstrated a 3.5% increase in fitness levels versus a 13.8% decrease in sedentary patients.

Sedentary patients were also more likely to have a positive exercise electrocardiogram or symptom (32%) than were active subjects (10%). They also had more comorbidities.

Overall, 11% of active group patients and 28% of sedentary group patients had the metabolic syndrome at 10 years. In the active group, those who moved from low to moderate to high fitness showed significantly fewer metabolic markers compared to those who remained at a low fitness levels or moved to a lower level.

In light of these findings and "since primary care physicians have greatest contact with most of the population at risk for cardiovascular disease," Dr. Petrella concluded, giving such lifestyle intervention to patients "could have the best impact if it were delivered by primary care physicians."

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