

Study shows exercise and diet improve cholesterol in overweight and obese adults

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(Medical Xpress) -- According to a recent report, more than 68 percent of American adults are either overweight or obese. A study by researchers in the West Virginia University School of Medicine, Tufts University and Stanford University shows that exercise and diet improve cholesterol in overweight and obese adults.

George A. Kelley, D.A., and Kristi S. Kelley, M.Ed., researchers in the WVU Department of Community Medicine, Susan Roberts, Ph.D., Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging at Tufts University, and William Haskell, Ph.D., Stanford Prevention Research Center, studied data on the combined effects of aerobic exercise and [diet](#) on cholesterol levels in adults who were overweight or obese.

“This is the first study to thoroughly examine the literature regarding the effects of aerobic exercise and diet on cholesterol levels in overweight and obese adults, a group that is at an increased risk of death from heart disease and stroke,” Dr. Kelley said.

The researchers pooled the results from 12 earlier studies that included 859 men and women who were overweight or obese. Exercise included aerobic exercise (for example, walking), approximately three times per week along with any diet considered to improve cholesterol levels in adults.

Reductions in the “bad” types of cholesterol were approximately 6 percent for total cholesterol and 5 percent for low-density lipoprotein

cholesterol. In addition, a reduction of about 13 percent was found for triglycerides. No significant change was found for high-density lipoprotein cholesterol, the “good” cholesterol.

“It is well established that overweight and obese adults have higher cholesterol levels leading to an increased risk of premature death. These findings suggest that [aerobic exercise](#) and diet can be an important option for improving [cholesterol](#) levels in overweight and [obese adults](#),” Dr. Kelley said. “The improvements in [cholesterol levels](#) found in the current study could prevent thousands of deaths each year from heart disease and stroke in overweight and obese Americans.”

The study, supported by a grant from the National Institutes of Health, appears in the March issue of the [Journal of Obesity](#).

Provided by West Virginia University

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