

## U of M study shows physical activity reduces risk of hypertension in young adults

April 12 2007

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Young adults who spend more time participating in physical activity have a reduced risk of developing high blood pressure within the next 15 years, according to researchers at the University of Minnesota.

Research published in the April 2007 issue of the *American Journal of Public Health* found that young adults who exercised an average of five times a week and expended 300 calories per exercise session experienced a 17 percent reduction in the risk of developing hypertension.

In addition, study participants who maintained or increased their total time participating in physical activity from the start of the study to the finish decreased their risk of high blood pressure by 11 percent for every 1,500 calories they burned weekly.

"This study is the first of its kind to examine the link between physical activity and hypertension in young adults," said David Jacobs, Ph.D., study co-author and professor of epidemiology and community health at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. "The study further confirms evidence that physical activity is related to hypertension."

Jacobs and colleague Emily Parker, lead author of the study and doctoral student at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health, analyzed data from the Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults (CARDIA) study, which tracked physical activity and measured blood pressure levels in nearly 4,000 men and women over a 15-year period.

Overall, 634 adults developed cases of hypertension over the 15 years of follow-up. After adjusting for race, age, sex, education, and family history, data showed that those participants who were more physically active experienced a reduced risk for hypertension compared with those who were less physically active. "This study shows that physical activity should be considered in the prevention of hypertension in young adults," said Jacobs. "This link gives people another reason to increase their levels of exercise and remain physically active."

Source: University of Minnesota

Citation: U of M study shows physical activity reduces risk of hypertension in young adults (2007, April 12) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2007-04-physical-hypertension-young-adults.html>

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