

Physical activity improves walking capacity in Chilean elderly

April 19 2011

Policies to promote healthy ageing often emphasize a healthy diet and maintaining physical activity. But currently there is little good evidence to support the benefits of improved nutrition and increased physical activity levels for older adults from low-income or transition economies.

Alan Dangour from the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, United Kingdom, and colleagues report this week in *PLoS Medicine* the outcomes of the Cost-effectiveness Evaluation of a Nutritional supplement and EXercise program for older people — CENEX — which evaluated whether Chile's national nutritional supplementation and physical exercise program prevented pneumonia and physical functional decline in older people in Santiago, and whether these interventions were cost-effective.

Using a cluster randomized trial design they found that during the 2-year trial the incidence rate of pneumonia did not differ between intervention and control groups but, at the end of the study period, there was a significant difference in walking capacity between the intervention and control clusters. Therefore, the provision of locally-available [physical activity](#) classes to older people could be of clinical benefit, especially in urban settings.

More information: Dangour AD, Albala C, Allen E, Grundy E, Walker DG, et al. (2011) Effect of a Nutrition Supplement and Physical Activity Program on Pneumonia and Walking Capacity in Chilean Older People: A Factorial Cluster Randomized Trial. *PLoS Med* 8(4):

e1001023. [doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1001023](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001023)

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Citation: Physical activity improves walking capacity in Chilean elderly (2011, April 19)
retrieved 24 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2011-04-physical-capacity-chilean-elderly.html>

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