

# Sedentary behavior linked to heart risk in Hispanics

September 28 2015

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Spending a lot of time being sedentary appears to be risky for Hispanics' heart health, even when they get regular exercise, according to new research in the American Heart Association's journal *Circulation*.

"Any time people are off their feet and in one place—including while they are sitting and reading, doing office work, watching TV, eating, or riding in a car or bus—they are considered sedentary," said Qibin Qi, Ph.D., study lead author and assistant professor of epidemiology and [population health](#) at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Montefiore Health System in New York City. "For people who have sedentary jobs, it's unclear whether more exercise at other times of day can reduce their heart risk. Still, these data suggest that getting up from your desk job to move around once in a while could be beneficial."

Researchers used 2008-11 data from the Hispanic Community Health Study/Study of Latinos and divided 12,083 Hispanic adults into four groups according to how much time they spent being sedentary, as determined by an accelerometer—a device that can measure time spent sedentary and physically active. All participants received physical exams, including a blood draw. Participants were of Mexican, South American, Cuban, Dominican, Puerto Rican or Central American backgrounds and they lived in Chicago, Miami, San Diego, or the Bronx, N.Y.

Researchers found that the more inactive they were, the higher their heart and diabetes risks were, according to several [health](#) markers. Compared to Hispanics with the highest physical activity, those who

were most inactive had:

- 6 percent lower blood levels of HDL cholesterol (known as the "good" cholesterol);
- 16 percent higher triglycerides, a fat associated with buildup of plaque in the arteries; and
- 29 percent higher measure of insulin resistance, indicating that the body isn't able to use insulin as effectively to process blood sugar.

"The highest-risk group was sedentary more than 13 hours a day," Qi said. "The link between more [sedentary time](#) and worse test results occurred regardless of whether people met weekly exercise guidelines, which call for 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of vigorous activity, or an equivalent combination."

The negative impact of sedentary time on health was consistent across young and old, men and women, and in normal and overweight people, as well as in Hispanics of differing national origins. The research team accounted for multiple factors that could affect health, including education and employment, smoking, alcohol consumption, diet and medications.

"Individuals at high risk for cardiovascular disease and diabetes should work with their doctor to manage specific disease risk factors through diet and lifestyle modifications, medications, and other strategies," Qi said. "Efforts to reduce time spent in sedentary behaviors may play an important role in prevention strategies."

Provided by American Heart Association

Citation: Sedentary behavior linked to heart risk in Hispanics (2015, September 28) retrieved 1

May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2015-09-sedentary-behavior-linked-heart-hispanics.html>

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