

ACSM AND AMA LAUNCH “EXERCISE IS MEDICINE” PROGRAM

Calls for Physicians to Prescribe Exercise to Patients

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the American Medical Association (AMA) today launched **Exercise is Medicine™**, a new program designed to encourage America’s patients to incorporate physical activity and exercise into their daily routine. **Exercise is Medicine™** calls on doctors to prescribe exercise to their patients.

A recent survey conducted of the public by ACSM found that nearly two-thirds of patients (65%) would be more interested in exercising to stay healthy if advised by their doctor and given additional resources. Four out of 10 physicians (41%) talk to their patients about the importance of exercise, but don’t always offer suggestions on the best ways to be physically active. Patients (25%) look to their doctor first for advice on exercise and physical activity. They turn next to fitness and health Web sites (24%).

The goal of the **Exercise is Medicine™** program is to encourage physicians to record physical activity as a vital sign during patient visits. Able patients will be advised to participate in at least 30 minutes of physical activity and 10 minutes of stretching and light muscle training five days a week.

A new Web site—www.exerciseismedicine.org—contains educational materials and toolkits for physicians to use in their practices. The site also includes information for patients, the media, and policymakers, as well as a listing of initial supporting organizations. Educational models will be developed for use in medical schools so students can learn the importance of prescribing exercise to patients early in their careers.

Physical inactivity is a fast-growing public health problem in this country and contributes to a variety of chronic diseases and health complications, including obesity, coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, cancer, depression and anxiety, arthritis and osteoporosis. In addition to improving a patient’s overall health, increasing physical activity has proven effective in the treatment and prevention of chronic disease.

“We already advise against smoking; recommending exercise should be no different,” said Robert E. Sallis, M.D., ACSM president. “Physicians can support the program by prescribing exercise and offering patients basic educational materials. Exercise can have tremendous health benefits for patients.”

“More than half of Americans don’t get nearly enough exercise and would be astounded to see how much difference a brisk 30-minute walk a few times a week makes in their overall health,” said Ronald M. Davis, M.D., AMA president. “We encourage physicians to talk to their patients about the importance of exercise and to work with them to establish programs they can start today and continue throughout their lives.”

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About the American College of Sports Medicine

The [American College of Sports Medicine](http://www.acsm.org) is the largest sports medicine and exercise science organization in the world. More than 20,000 international, national, and regional members are dedicated to advancing and integrating scientific research to provide educational and practical applications of exercise science and sports medicine.

About the American Medical Association

The American Medical Association (AMA) helps doctors help patients by uniting physicians nationwide to work on the most important professional, public health and advocacy issues in medicine. Working together, the AMA's quarter of a million physician and medical student members are playing an active role in shaping the future of medicine. For more information on the AMA, please visit www.ama-assn.org.

About the survey results:

ACSM's Exercise is Medicine™ survey was conducted by Kelton Research between October 29th and November 1st, 2007 using an email invitation and an online survey. The individuals sampled for the survey were randomly selected from those individuals who provided their email addresses and opted-in to participate in surveys conducted by Kelton Research. Quotas were set to ensure reliable and accurate representation of the total U.S. population age 18 and above.

Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results. In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 3.1 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all persons in the universe represented by the sample.

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