



COMMUNITY HEALTH DATA BASE

An Information Service of Public Health Management Corporation

Data findings

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AMONG ADULTS IN SOUTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA

July 2016

With summer underway, many adults are taking advantage of this warmer weather by being more active outdoors. There are numerous benefits to regular physical activity, including:

- Improving chronic medical conditions such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease;
- Improving the ability to perform daily tasks;
- Decreasing risk for osteoporosis and cardiovascular disease; and
- Decreasing risk of early death

Nationwide, about half of adults do not meet the recommended levels of physical activity despite a growing body of evidence about the benefits from being physically active [1]. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals should aim to engage in some form of physical activity at least three times a week along with eating a healthier diet.

Using data from PHMC's Community Health Data Base 2015 Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA) Household Health Survey, the following article examines adults 18 years of age or older and their exercise habits/behaviors.

Demographic Characteristics among Adults

- In Southeastern Pennsylvania (SEPA), slightly more than one-half of adults exercise the recommended amount which is defined as at least 30 minutes three times per week or greater; this represents nearly 1,625,000.
- About 48.4% of adults do not exercise for the recommended amount each week.
- In SEPA, men (54.4%) are more likely to exercise the recommended amount compared to females (49.1%).
- Black adults (54%) are more likely to exercise the recommended amount compared to White (51.7%) Latino (45.1%) and Asian (45%) adults.
- The data show that as age increases, the percentage of adults who exercise the recommended amount decreases. Younger adults ages 18-39 (57.3%) are more likely to exercise the recommended amount compared to adults ages 40-59 (52%) and adults 60+ (45.1%).

Obesity, High Blood pressure, Physical Activity and Environmental Networks among Adults



- Adults who are obese are less likely to exercise the recommended amount (23.9%) compared to adults who are overweight (36%) or of normal weight (38.6%).
- Among adults in SEPA with high blood pressure slightly more than one-quarter (27.9%) exercise the recommended amount each week.
- Data from previous PHMC surveys indicate that as public recreation facility utilization decreases, the percentage of adults who exercise less than three times per week increases. About a quarter of adults (26.6%) who use recreational facilities at least once a week exercise less than three times per week compared to 37.1% of adults who use recreational facilities at least once a month, 45.2% of adults who use recreational facilities less than once a month, and 49.2% of adults who never use recreational facilities.

Recommendations to increase physical activity among adults include community wide mass media campaigns and increased access to recreational facilities. For more information about the findings presented in this article, please contact Francine Axler at Francine@phmc.org.

Citations:

[1] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). U.S. Physical Activity Statistics, 2008. Available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nccdphp/dnpa/physical/stats/index.htm>