THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS: RATIONALE FOR REGULAR REVIEW AND UPDATES

In a landmark achievement, the United States Department of Health and Human Services published the first ever Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans in 2008. This science-based guidance helps guide Americans aged 6 and older in efforts to improve and maintain their health and avoid disease through appropriate and regular physical activity and serves as the foundation for federal, state, and local physical activity policy. The Guidelines also help physicians provide advice to their patients and help people learn the health benefits of physical activity, the amount of exercise to do each day to improve or maintain health and how to be physically active, while reducing the risks of injury. Unlike the Dietary Guidelines for Americans that are evaluated every five years for an update, the Physical Activity Guidelines have no such mandate from Congress.

Since the U.S. population is becoming more sedentary, diabetes rates are continuing to climb, and obesity remains an epidemic, it is more important than ever that we continue to actively promote regular physical activity to the U.S. population through whatever means are available. As part of this effort, we are in need of a regularly-updated set of Physical Activity Guidelines to guide our efforts and reduce sedentary behavior through a regular review of the latest science. The update process for federal dietary and physical activity guidelines has a financial cost of about $1 million, so the Department of Health and Human Services is hesitant to support this effort without a strong rationale to do so. Thus, it is important that we provide this rationale. Authorities believe that such a review should occur every five years as is done with the Dietary Guidelines, in order to determine if there is enough emerging science for interim guidance and should be mandatory every ten years for a comprehensive update.

Some topics for review and potential inclusion in the next iteration of the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans update:

- ***Assessment of Physical Activity and/or Exercise Capacity in Clinical Practice as a Potential Vital Sign***[1,2]
- ***The Impact of the Type of Exercise and Intensity on Diabetes and Metabolic Syndrome***[3,4,5,6,7]
- ***Sedentary Behavior and its Impact on Health***[8,9,10,11,12,13,14]
- ***Physical Activity and its Relation to Body Weight***[15,16,17,18,19]

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- ***Physical Activity Guidelines for Young Children (Ages 2-5)***[20,21,22]
- ***Measuring Physical Activity Levels in the Population/Effective Surveillance***[23]
- ***Differences in Exercise Response Between Men and Women***[24, 25]
- ***Genetic Influence on Exercise Response***[26]

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