

# Heart of New Ulm project results show improvement in heart disease risk factors

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Researchers from Allina Health and the Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation have presented on the results and implications of The Heart of New Ulm Project on heart disease risk factors at the American Heart Association Scientific Sessions in Chicago, Ill.

The Heart of New Ulm is a 10-year community intervention aimed at reducing the rate of modifiable [cardiovascular disease](#) risk factors in a [rural community](#) through interventions delivered through clinical, worksite, and broader community settings with goals of improving lifestyle changes, clinical care, and the environment where community members work and play. Interventions include [heart](#) health screenings, health coaching, worksite health improvement programs, improving the food environment with restaurants and farmers markets, and increasing the opportunities for physical activity in the community.

In the first study, a research team examined how CVD [risk factors](#) had changed over the first five years of the project. Significant improvements were identified for blood pressure and lipids at the population level. The percentage of residents with blood pressure at goal increased from 78.7 percent to 84.3 percent, and the percentage with LDL cholesterol at goal increased from 68 percent to 72 percent. No significant changes were noted in BMI, glucose and smoking. These population-level improvements were driven primarily by better risk factor control among those who were not at goal when the project began.

In the second study, a research team examined whether short-term changes in lifestyle factors had an effect on high density lipoprotein (HDL) and total cholesterol/HDL ratio. They found that weight loss was the strongest lifestyle predictor of increased HDL. Furthermore, quitting smoking and decreased physical activity were associated respectively with improved and poorer total cholesterol/HDL ratio.

The annual American Heart Association Scientific Sessions is the leading cardiovascular conference for basic, translational, clinical and population science with more than 15,000 cardiovascular health experts in attendance. The 2014 sessions are being held at McCormick Place in Chicago, Ill.

Provided by Minneapolis Heart Institute Foundation

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