

Exercise reduces risk of death from cardiovascular disease in people with high blood pressure

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In the study, all-cause and CVD mortality risks were found to be significantly higher among study participants that didn't exercise compared with active participants at all blood pressure levels. Moreover, the excess mortality risks of physical inactivity, when converted into a "blood pressure equivalence of physical activity" measurement, revealed that physical inactivity was similar to a rise in mortality risk equivalent to an increase in blood pressure of 40-50 mmHg.

"The risk of developing CVD has been proven to increase significantly as blood pressure increases; and reducing blood pressure to reduce CVD risk is an important treatment goal for all physicians," said CP Wen, Institute of Population Health Science, National Health Research Institute, Taiwan. "This study is the first to quantify the impact of exercise on the risk profile of people with [high blood pressure](#). Appreciating this relationship will hopefully help to motivate people with high blood pressure that are inactive to take exercise."

Dr Wen continued, "To date, exercise and high blood pressure have been managed separately, with people mainly being concerned about their [blood pressure readings](#). However, these results suggest that doctors should also discuss the importance of physical exercise as a means to manage the CVD and all-cause [mortality risk](#)."

The prospective study of 434,190 individuals in Taiwan was conducted over a period of 12 years. Of the participants 54 per cent were classified as inactive, 22 per cent as low active and 24 per cent were considered to be medium, or above, active. All-cause and CVD mortality risk of inactive subjects were compared with active subjects. The blood pressure equivalence of physical activity was then identified by the difference in mortality risks between physically inactive and active subjects.

Hypertension (high blood pressure) is one of the major preventable risk factors for premature death from CVD worldwide. High blood pressure contributes to around half of all CVD and the risk of developing CVD doubles for every 10-point increase in diastolic blood pressure.

High blood pressure that is left untreated can greatly increase a person's risk of developing CVD. Treating raised blood pressure has been associated with a 35% per cent reduction in the risk of stroke and at least a 16 per cent reduction in the risk of myocardial infarction.

Provided by World Heart Federation

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