

Walking or Biking to Work Associated With Lower Blood Pressure, Triglyceride Levels

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Authors and Disclosures

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July 14, 2009 (Chapel Hill, North Carolina) — Hopping on a bicycle or walking to work is positively associated with fitness levels in men and women, as well as inversely associated with obesity, triglyceride levels, blood pressure, and insulin levels in men, according to the results of a new study [1].

In men, the statistical associations between active commuting and various cardiovascular disease risk factors disappeared after adjustment for body mass index (BMI), "suggesting that BMI is a potential mediator between active commuting and cardiovascular disease risk," report lead investigator **Dr Penny Gordon-Larsen** (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill) and colleagues in the July 13, 2009 issue of the *Archives of Internal Medicine*.

The study, from the **Coronary Artery Risk Development in Young Adults** (CARDIA), included 2364 subjects who worked outside the home in 2005–2006. Active commuting was defined as any walking or cycling from home to work or work to home. In addition to commuting, participants were asked about their participation in different physical activities, including recreational sports, exercise, and leisure and occupational activities.

Although just 16.7% of subjects reported walking or cycling to work, those considered "active" tended to live closer to their work but also were more likely to walk or bike to the workplace. In men, commuting was inversely associated with BMI, obesity, triglyceride levels, diastolic blood pressure, and fasting insulin levels, and positively associated with HDL-cholesterol levels and fitness levels assessed by exercise time on the treadmill. In women, daily physical activity levels and fitness levels were positively associated with active commuting.

"Associations were clearer for men, who had relatively higher rates and distance of active commuting, thus suggesting that efforts to increase active commuting in women may be particularly relevant for increasing overall physical activity," comment Gordon-Larsen and colleagues.

Results of this study confirm the health benefits of leisure-time walking, they add, but further studies are needed to address the amount of active commuting needed to positively influence health outcomes. In addition, better tools are needed to more precisely quantify commuting to and from the workplace.

[References](#)