



How Physically Active are Employees at University of Limerick Hospitals Group?

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- Sedentary work, which affects up to 75% of employees in industrialised countries, coupled with increasing use of car is resulting in a decline in physical activity among employees. National travel surveys show that the average distance people walk and cycle has declined significantly in the last three decades (National Statistics 2004).
 - According to NICE guidelines (2008), employers should develop an organisation-wide plan or policy to encourage and support employees to be more physically active.
 - Therefore, initiatives in the workplace, in line with the Healthy Ireland (HI) policy, promoting physical activity should be explored and developed.

Aim of our study



The purpose of this study was to determine employees:

- Current physical activity
- Attitudes to behavioural change
- Barriers to exercise
- Active commuting levels

This survey also assessed facilities desired to encourage an uptake of physical activity within the UL Hospitals Group.

Ethics:

Ethical approval was obtained from the UHL Ethics Committee

Questionnaire:

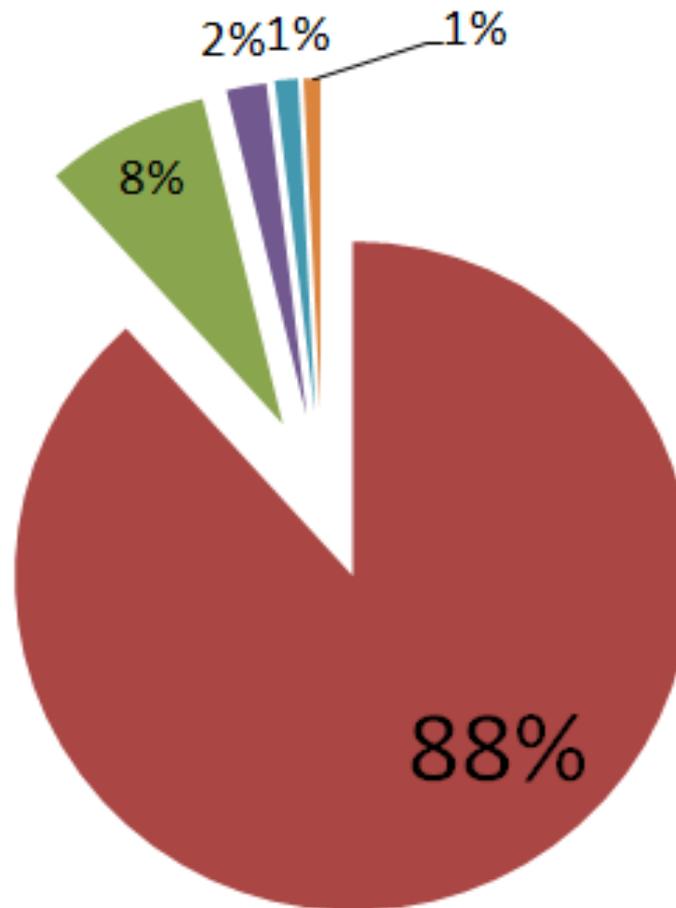
A questionnaire was amended from the Active@Work campaign by the Irish Heart Foundation and was distributed online and onsite among all staff members of the UL Hospitals Group.

Efforts were made in all five sites to encourage staff to participate

- Out of a workforce of 3422, 1006 employees responded thereby providing a response rate of **29.4%**
- 27.3% of employees are not currently physically active
- 95.8% reported positive attitudes to behavioural change e.g. partaking in a healthy programme if it was offered by the organisation
- Primary barriers to physical activity included time (65.3%), work commitments (43.3%) and family commitments (35.5%)

Travel to Work

■ Private Car ■ Walk ■ Cycle ■ Public Transport ■ Carpool



Likert scale illustrating employees' likelihood to be physically active should the facilities be available

Facility:	Extremely/Fairly likely	Undecided	Extremely/Fairly unlikely
Showers and changing facilities	88.9%	5.2%	7%
Lockers and storage facilities	88.4%	4.3%	7.4%
Safe, dry and well lit bicycle racks	57.9%	12.3%	29.9%
Walking/Running track around the hospital	86.2%	6.1%	7.7%

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- 27.3% of employees do not meet the recommended physical activity levels at UHL. This is close to the national level of physical inactivity of 41% (SLAN 2007)
 - A significant majority of employees travel to work by car which has implications for the individual and the organisation. Active commuting should be encouraged to increase physical activity (Dora 1999)
 - Facilities should be made available which would encourage an increase in physical activity in the workplace

What have we done since?

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- Health Ireland Project Lead at UL Hospitals Group
 - Initiatives at promoting physical activity- new bike racks at UHL - Limerick Smarter Travel
 - Pedometer Challenge
 - Couch to 5k training programmes with annual 5K Run
 - Take the stairs initiative
 - Lunchtime Walks/Lunchtime Pilates
 - Operation Transformation
 - Sports and Social Club

.....Active@work Gold Award

HSE Summer Games June 10th



Conclusion



Consideration should be given towards developing initiatives within the UL Hospitals Group that address employee physical activity levels and thereby result in promoting health and wellbeing, preventing disease and injury, improving productivity and promoting positive lifestyle behaviours.

Questions

