

EDITORIAL**Physical Inactivity: The Major Risk Factor for Non-Communicable Diseases****Abraham Haileamlak, MD, Professor of Pediatrics and Child Health**

Noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) contribute to two-thirds of the world's deaths. Nearly 80% of NCD deaths, close to 30 million per year, occur in low- and middle-income countries. Several factors influence the occurrence of NCDs including diet and lifestyle. As we presented the magnitude of NCDs in our previous issues, the focus for this note is to discuss briefly about physical inactivity which is the major risk factor for non-communicable diseases. About 9% of all deaths globally are attributed to physical inactivity (1).

Physical inactivity is the term used to refer to inability to achieve the recommended levels of physical activity for health. Many people worldwide failed to have the recommended at least 30 minutes of regular, moderate-intensity physical activity on most days throughout a person's life.

Physical inactivity is now described as a pandemic that needs urgent action (2). Research showed that 1 in 4 adults in the world are inactive. Globally, more than 80% of the adolescent population is physically inactive (3). It is evidenced that physically inactive people are 20-30% times more likely at risk of death compared to active individuals. Currently, there are global efforts to decrease the prevalence of physical inactivity by 10% at the end of 2025 (3). Though there are other means, having exercise is the best way to increase physical activity (4). Countries must plan physical inactivity interventions with the aim of preventing and managing NCDs (2). Evidences also showed the importance of physical exercise for the treatment of NCDs (5-7). It is known to improve physiological functioning and cognitive, emotional, social and psychosocial functioning as well as to alter health beliefs and increase acceptance of chronic disease (6).

There is no single method of increasing physical activity level; instead a comprehensive collaborative approach is most effective. Interventions should be easy, simple, cheap, social and sustainable across the life span.

Likewise, though not enough, Ethiopia started once a month "car free day" initiative on major roads of major cities to promote physical activity with the aim of preventing and treating NCDs. This initiative is done where political leaders are in front and many others joining the gatherings. Such initiatives must be strengthened with increasing frequency.

The current issue of the journal, the first regular issue for the year 2019, contains an editorial, fourteen original articles, two reviews and a case report focusing on various topics. Eight of the articles in this issue deal with NCDs which could have been avoided by physical activity.

I invite readers to read through these articles and appreciate or utilize the contents. I also urge readers to forward comments and suggestions to the editor or the corresponding authors.

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