



ESC Project: The influence of strangers in physical activity and sedentary behavior. A randomized controlled trial

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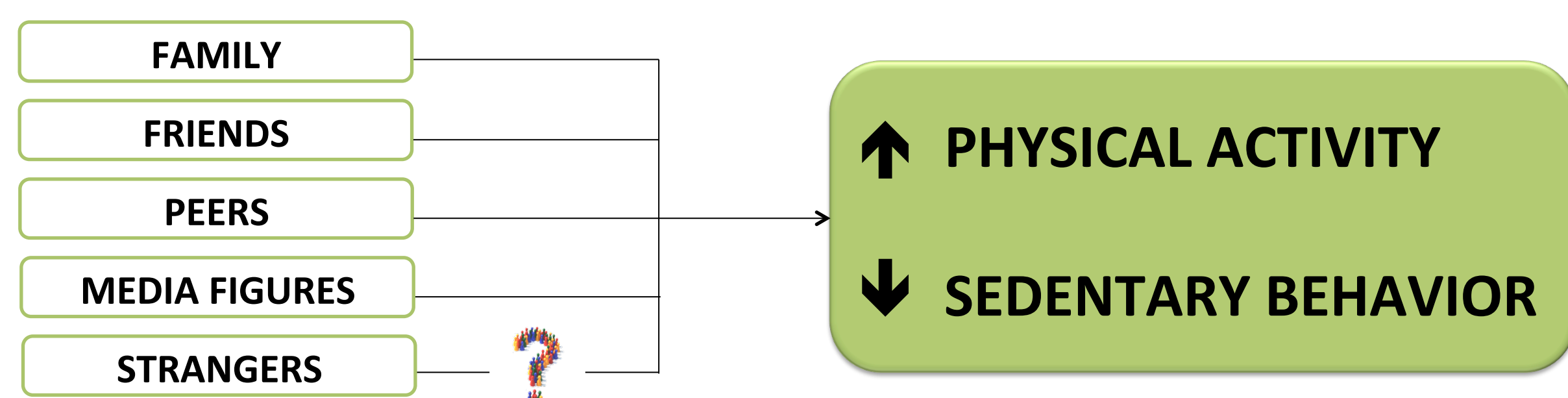
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Introduction

A rising number of interventions targeting health behavior change have been emerging from Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory (1). Recent research shows that exercise motivation can be "contagious" (2) and suggests that family (3), friends, peers (4) and media figures (5) can be used to make people more active and less sedentary. However, it seems that there is a lack of knowledge about social contagion through strangers. Hence, the main purpose of this study was to analyse the association between social contagion through strangers and Physical Activity (PA) and Sedentary Behavior (SB) levels.



Methods

- Data from the ESC (Exercise Socially Contagious) Project
- Randomized Controlled trial
- 74 adults** (18-64 years), both genders, with 2 groups (37 participants each):

Intervention Group (IG)

- Exposed to strangers (staff members):
- talking about **PA**
- 10 people doing **PA**
- PA** video

Control Group (CG)

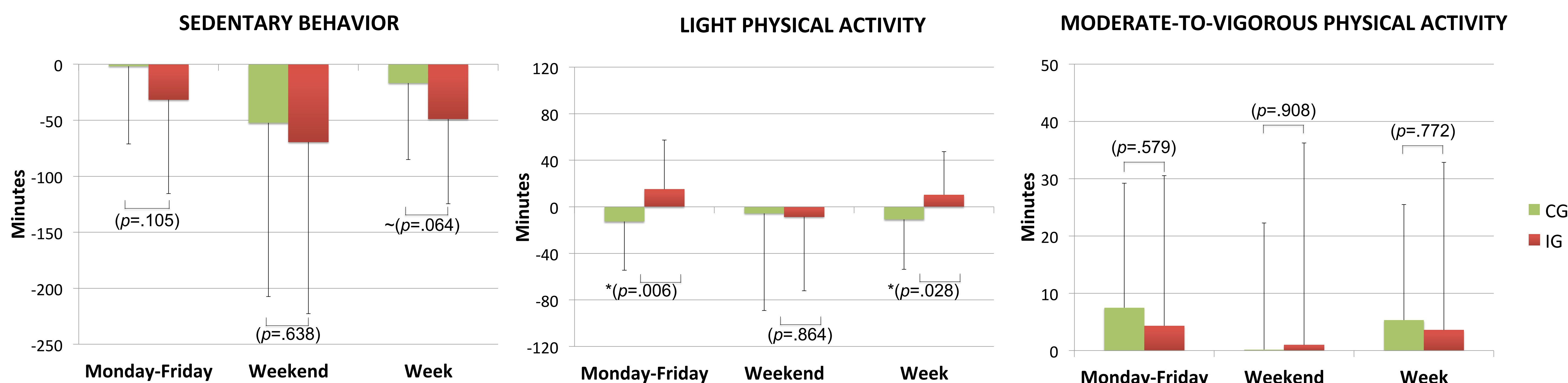
- Exposed to a video about **healthy nutrition**

- Participants PA and SB were measured objectively by **accelerometers** Actigraph wGT3X 512 MB for seven consecutive days, **before** and **after** the intervention.
- We compared the difference between post-test and pre-test of both groups (IG and CG) using a T-test for independent samples



Results

Differences between post-test and pre-test



Conclusions

The data indicate that the exposure to strangers doing and talking about PA was associated with a **SB decrease** in approximately 30 min in a week and a **LPA increase** in about 20 min in a week. Therefore, social contagion through strangers appears to promote behavior changes concerning PA and SB.

References

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