**Migrating from an inactive to an active country: associations with physical activity and sitting time**

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**Abstract**

**Introduction:**

In the European Union (EU), 59% of the citizens claim that they never or seldom exercise or play sports, although there is a great difference between countries (e.g., 72% in Portugal vs. 30% in Sweden).1 As the migrant population changes and grows in the EU, understanding the factors that influence PA and SB is essential for considering this group’s needs and planning interventions. The effect of migration on PA and SB, however, is understudied. Contextual factors (perception of walkability), as well as individual factors (quality of motivation), may play an important role. Furthermore, migrating from or to an active/inactive country may have different impacts. The aim of this work was to analyze if emigration from an inactive country (i.e., with a high prevalence of inactive people and low prevalence of active people) to an active country changed PA, sitting time, the perception of walkability, and the quality of motivation in adults.

**Methods:** Eighty-one adult emigrants were asked about their host country (“active country”) and their home country (“inactive country”). A self-report assessed walkability perception, quality of motivation, PA, and sitting time in both contexts.

**Results:** When participants emigrated from an inactive to an active country, they increased their walking time (*r* = .55, large effect size), moderate PA (MPA; *r* = .33, medium effect size), moderate-to-vigorous PA (MVPA; *r* = .21, small effect size), and the total PA MET-min (*r* = .33, medium effect size) per week. As the relation of PA with individual factors decreased, contextual factors may explain the increase in PA.

**Conclusions:** Migrating from an inactive to an active country could make people more active.

**References**

1. European Commission. *Special Eurobarometer 412. Sport and Physical Activity.* Brussels: TNS Opinion & Social2014.