



ESC Project: The influence of strangers in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity. A randomized controlled trial

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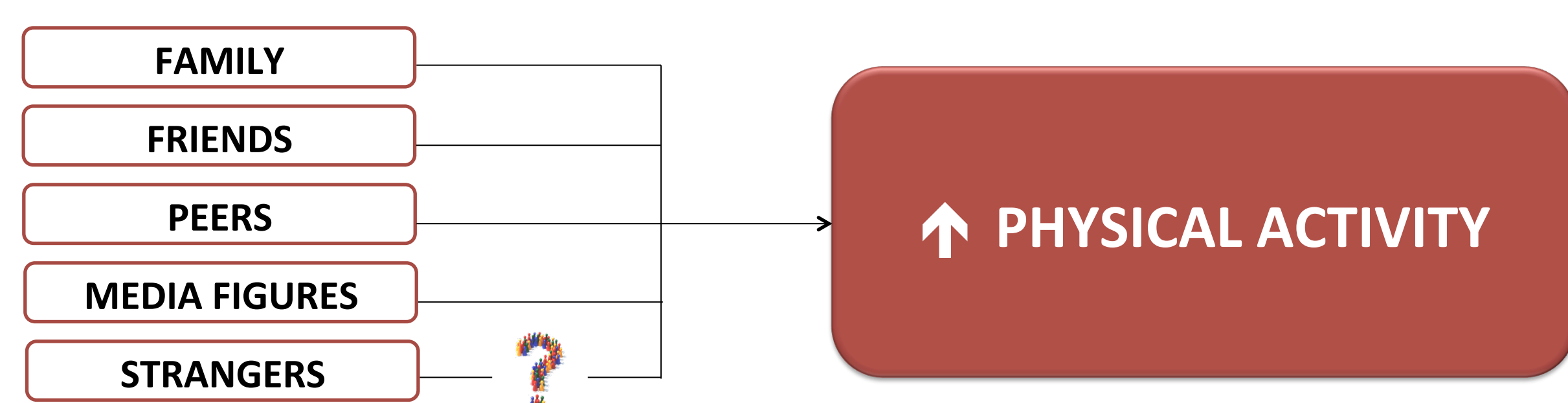
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Introduction

Programs that promote behavior changes towards Physical Activity (PA) seem warranted. Recent research emerging from Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory shows that PA can be "contagious" (1). Interventions with family (2), friends, peers (3) and media figures (4) seem to show results in behavior change promotion. Nevertheless, PA social contagion through strangers is not well known. So, the aim of this randomized controlled trial was to analyse the association between social contagion through strangers and PA 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

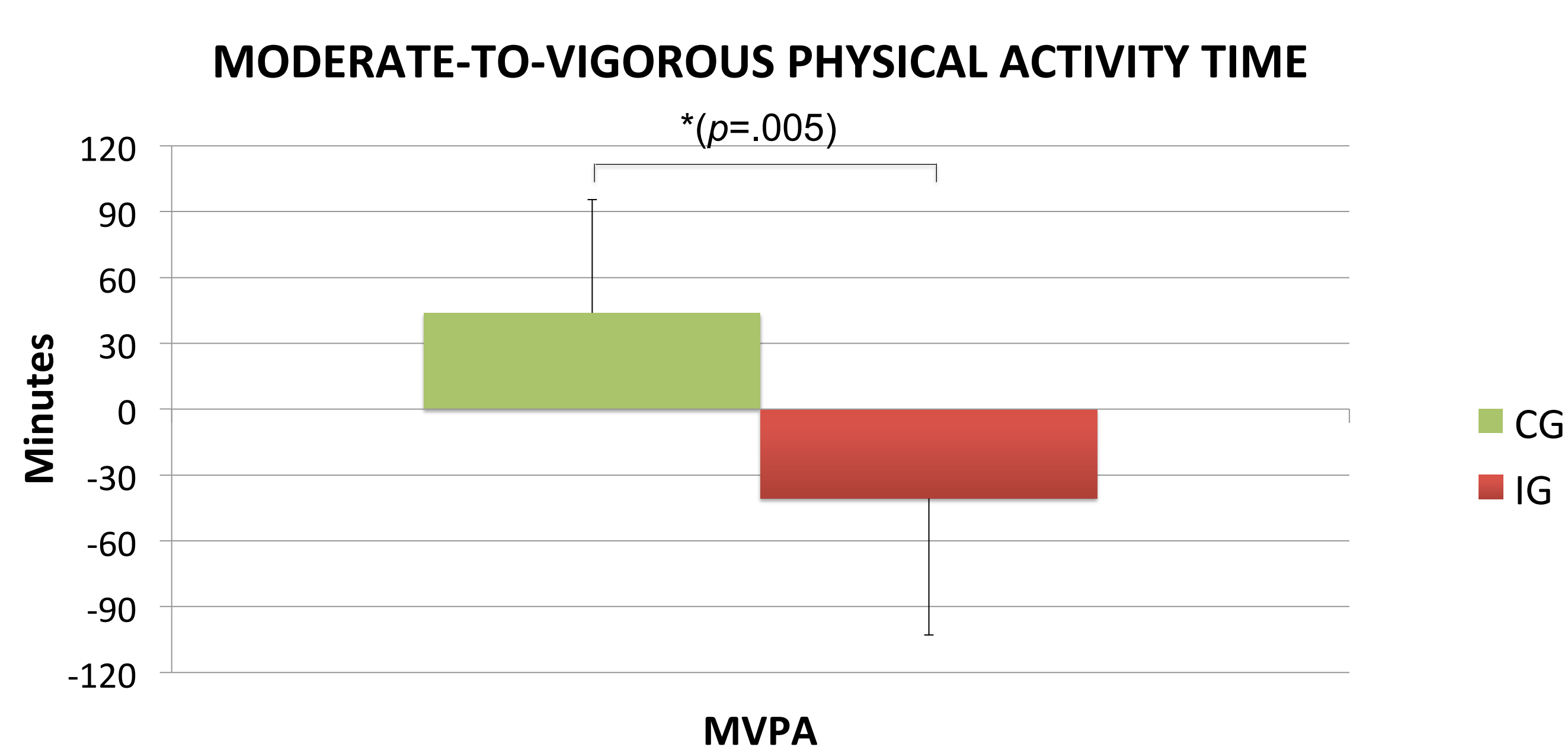
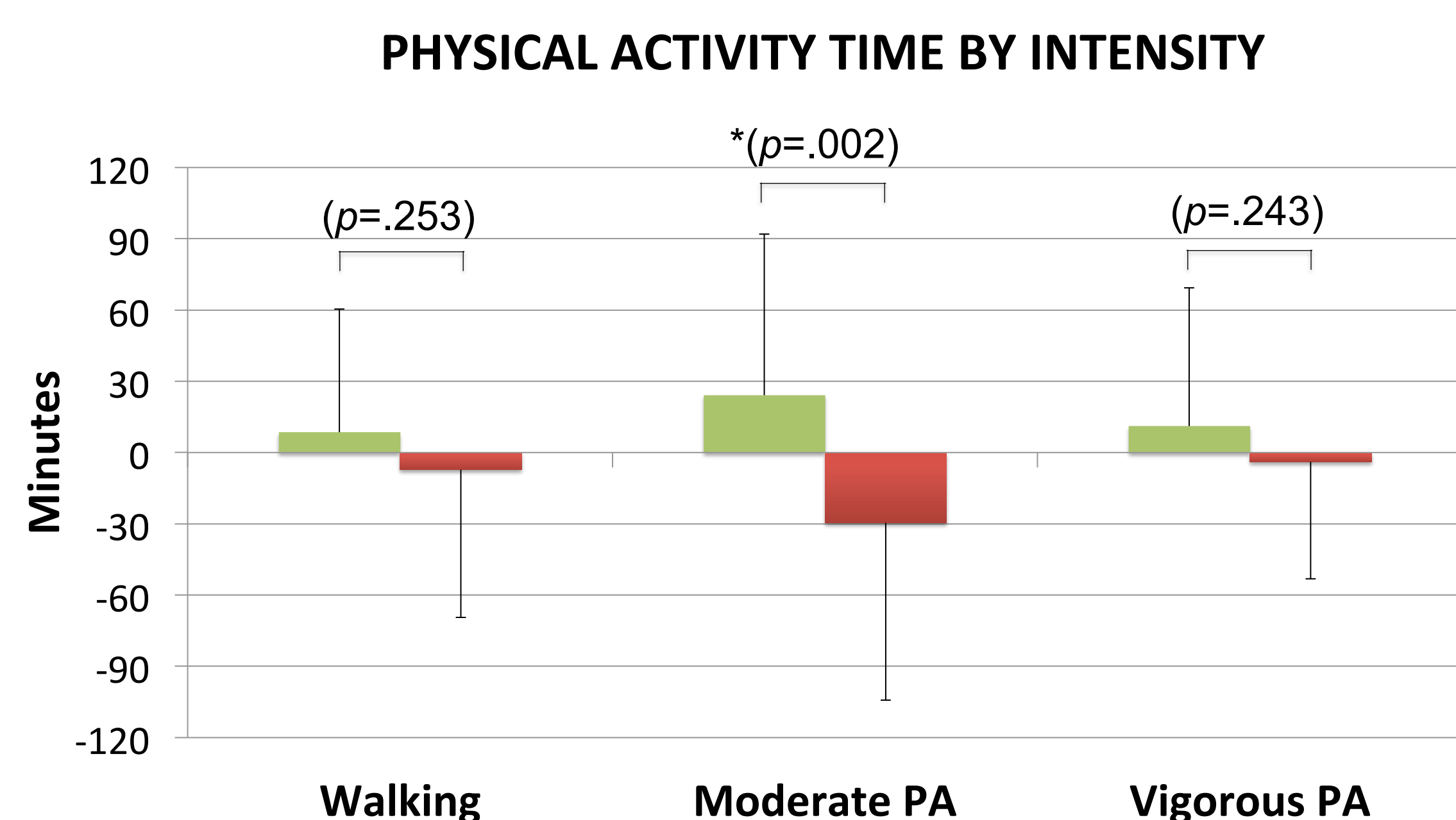
Control Group (CG)

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

- Participants PA was measured through the **short form of the International Physical Activity Questionnaire (IPAQ-SF)**
- They completed the IPAQ-SF a week **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

Participants who were exposed to strangers doing and talking about PA reported approximately **40 min less MVPA** in a week. Meanwhile, those who were exposed to a video about healthy nutrition **increased their MVPA in about 40 min** in a week. These results were contrary to the hypothesis. Possibly, social desirability, played a role on the IG responses, so further testing with **objective measures** is being conducted.

References

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