

New WHO Global Action Plan for Physical Activity can help prevent deaths and disability from NCDs

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Media Release

New World Health Organization Global Action Plan for Physical Activity can help prevent deaths and disability from noncommunicable diseases

Monday, 4 June, 2018 (Lisbon, Portugal) -The NCD Alliance has welcomed [More Active People for a Healthier World](#) [1], the new WHO Global Action Plan for Physical Activity (GAPPA) 2018-2030, launched today in Lisbon, saying it has the potential to prevent huge numbers of deaths and disability from noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) across the globe.

"We're at a tipping point when it comes to physical activity, said Katie Dain, CEO of the NCD Alliance, speaking at today's launch. "For myriad reasons the world is just not active enough. In some populations, up to 80 per cent of adults are not sufficiently active to realise the protective benefits of physical activity, and are consequently at increased risk of poor health."

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"Promoting physical activity is a cost effective, health and development promoting opportunity, and the Action Plan should catalyse governments and stakeholders to step up with action, collaboration and public policies that promote the wellbeing of all people everywhere for a more active and healthy world."

The new Action Plan was announced earlier today in Lisbon and later in the afternoon will feature a launch event to be held at the Headquarters of the Portuguese Football Federation. Katie Dain will join a number of key speakers at the event including WHO Director-General Dr Tedros and Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal. The NCD Alliance was a contributor to the Action Plan.

Environments important too

Being sufficiently active can reduce the severity of existing NCDs and risk of developing other simultaneous conditions. Meanwhile, many actions to ensure environments are conducive to physical activity will also benefit road safety, air quality, and community cohesion, contributing win-win opportunities for both improving health and achieving other Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

As with other NCD risk factors like unhealthy diets, tobacco and harmful alcohol use, the Action Plan recognises that inequity is an underlying determinant of how active populations and groups within them are. While population-wide policies can strengthen accessibility, affordability and ensure everyone has the opportunity to be more active, targeted physical activity promotion is also necessary to ensure the more vulnerable and least active groups are not left behind.

"Low- and middle-income countries are undergoing rapid globalisation and urbanisation as well as experiencing a transition from the burden of communicable to noncommunicable diseases – so it is timely that this this Action Plan provides impetus for integrating physical activity promoting policies through, for example, urban planning and workplace policies that facilitate physical activity," said Dain.

"With health systems in these countries not yet equipped to fully cope with chronic conditions, it is vital that health promotion and NCD prevention is a key element of planning for achievable and sustainable universal health coverage."

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