



# AMERICAN ACADEMY OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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## F O U N D A T I O N

### **Abstract of Study Supported by a Resident Research Grant in 2013**

#### **Making it Count: Combining Motivational Interviewing Techniques with a Goal-based Pedometer Curriculum to Enhance Fitness Outcomes Among Elementary School Children (G1303RRG)**

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#### **Abstract**

Sedentary lifestyle is a powerful contributor to our nation's growing obesity epidemic. Addressing this modifiable risk factor among children may establish habits to maintain regular physical activity into adulthood, and ultimately may foster a culture where active lifestyle is the norm. One of the local elementary schools in Southern California launched a health and wellness campaign after a 2010 assessment identified high rates of obesity among its students when compared to elementary students in the greater San Diego area. This school was highlighted as having especially high rates (over 40%) of obese and overweight students and an ideal population for a wellness intervention. The Scripps Chula Vista Family Medicine Residency has formed a community partnership with this elementary school to assist the school in improving and monitoring its health and wellness initiatives.

The proposed study population will be approximately sixty fifth-grade students, split between two classes, who will participate in the project over a 12-week period in the fall semester of the 2013-2014 school year. One class will serve as our intervention group while the other will serve as our control group. The study will begin by collecting a baseline number of steps/week measured by a pedometer during the duration of the school day. Pedometers will be collected at the week's end in order to record total number steps taken over the week. The pedometer component of the project will factor into the students' goal-setting by recommending each student strive to achieve an average of 12,000 steps/day based on prior studies of pedometers among school-aged children. The intervention group will take part in the goal-setting component of the project including maintaining a fitness diary where students will identify specific areas where they may increase their physical activity. Intervention students will regularly revisit their diaries, record individual and group weekly progress, and adjust their goals accordingly in a fashion similar to that used with motivational interviewing. The control group will

use pedometers to record their weekly number steps, but will not take part in the goal-setting aspect of the study.

The two groups will be compared by measuring statistical differences in number steps/week over the 12-week project. Additional potential variables include comparing weight, BMI, body image perceptions, and beliefs regarding the importance of physical fitness as part of maintaining a healthy lifestyle. It is anticipated that the goal-setting curriculum combined with pedometer usage may serve as a fun, interactive and cost-effective method for empowering children to reflect on both the individual and group levels, identify potential areas of improvement, and manage specific goals. If the pilot study is successful, it may be reproduced with a larger population involving all Rice Elementary fifth-graders and with additional elementary school populations. Potential successful outcomes may include enhancing student physical activity, self-image, fitness self-efficacy, and providing a model that elementary students may continue to use as they enter adolescence and adulthood.