Top Ten Things To Know
Guide to the Assessment of Physical Activity

1. Physical inactivity is a major risk factor for heart disease and many other chronic noncommunicable diseases that account for about 75% of the annual US healthcare expense.

2. A patient’s level of physical activity should be evaluated as regularly as other modifiable cardiovascular disease risk factors such as blood pressure, cholesterol, glucose, weight and smoking.

3. In order to appropriately advise patients in clinical and research settings on their physical activity status, providers should:
   — Familiarize themselves with the key concepts of physical activity assessment
   — Be able to help patients set goals and advise on how to include more activity in their daily lives

4. Understanding of physical activity assessment methods requires familiarity with the 4 dimensions and 4 domains of physical activity.

5. The 4 dimensions are: type of activity, frequency, duration and intensity.

6. The 4 domains are: occupational, domestic, transportation and leisure.

7. Proper assessment should include all domains, not just leisure-time physical activity.

8. Since there are many assessment methods and measures available, a decision matrix was developed to help providers choose the best tool considering desired outcome of interest, feasibility, cost, and time needed to administer.

9. Additional descriptions of strengths and weaknesses for various data collection tools are presented to help further inform the selection process.

10. There is no single best tool for physical activity assessment; however, this statement provides the steps for choosing the best tool for the specific clinical situation.


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