

## Psychosocial Job Characteristics and Active Leisure-Time Physical Activity in the US Workforce

BongKyoo Choi<sup>1</sup>, Peter Schnall<sup>1</sup>, Haiou Yang<sup>1</sup>, Marnie Dobson<sup>1</sup>, Paul Landsbergis<sup>2</sup>, Lesile Israel<sup>1</sup>, Robert Karasek<sup>3,4</sup>, Dean Baker<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, University of California Irvine, Irvine, USA.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences, The State University of New York Downstate School of Public Health, Brooklyn, USA.

<sup>3</sup>Department of Work Environment, University of Massachusetts Lowell, Lowell, USA.

<sup>4</sup>Department of Psychology, Copenhagen University, Copenhagen, Denmark.

**Background:** A substantial proportion of US adults are physically inactive.

**Aim:** To examine whether psychosocial job characteristics (job control and demands and their combinations) are associated with active leisure-time physical activity (LTPA) in US workers.

**Methods:** This secondary data analysis was based on the National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States (MIDUS) II dataset (2004-2006). The analysis included 955 male and 956 female workers (age range: 32 to 69). Active leisure-time physical activity was defined as “vigorous or moderate physical activity long enough to work up a sweat, several times a week or more during the summer or the winter”.

**Results:** Social status differences in LTPA prevalence were substantial (high education group, 53%; middle education group: 42%; low education group: 31% for men; 56%; 40%; and 32% for women). In univariate analyses, low job control for men and women and passive job (low job control and low job demands) for men were significantly ( $p < 0.01$ ) associated with non-active LTPA. In multivariate analyses with the covariates (e.g., sedentary work, physical job demands, education, annual household income, chronic diseases, smoking, alcohol consumption, and overeating), they increased the risk for non-active LTPA (odds ratios: 1.24 to 1.42;  $p$  values: 0.10 to 0.15). In education-stratified analyses, the associations were clearly supported in high and middle education groups for men and in low education group for women.

**Conclusion:** The leisure-time physical activity of US workers under an obesity epidemic may be strongly influenced by the ways in which work is organized.

**Key words:** job control, job demands, passive job, obesity.

**Address for correspondence:** BongKyoo Choi, Center for Occupational and Environmental Health, University of California Irvine, 5201 California Avenue, Suite 100, Irvine, CA, 92617. Tel: 1-949-824-5130, Fax: 1-949-824-2345. E-mail: [b.choi@uci.edu](mailto:b.choi@uci.edu).