

【OFFICIAL STATEMENT】

**Statement of Endorsing “FUN+WALK PROJECT”,
a New Project Led by Japan Sports Agency**

Japanese Association of Exercise Epidemiology
Official Statement Committee

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The Japanese Association of Exercise Epidemiology (JAEE) Official Statement Committee made an announcement on January 18, 2018 regarding “FUN+WALK PROJECT” *1, a new project led by Japan Sports Agency.

1. Statement

The JAEE endorses “FUN+WALK PROJECT”, a new project led by Japan Sports Agency, aiming at increasing participation rate of sports activities in working age adults at the population level.

2. Summary

Japan Sports Agency announced the commencement of a project named “FUN+WALK PROJECT” to promote sports activities at the population level by emphasizing the combination of “fun” and “walk”. In Japan, the participation rate of sports activities in adults aged 20 to 40, namely, working age adults, has been low. Thus, increase in the sports participation rate in young to middle-aged adults is extremely important to achieve an increase in the participation rate of sports activities at the national level. The primary target of the project is the young to middle-aged working adults, who often have less time for sports activities. One of the goals of this project is advancing environmental arrangement focusing on “walking”, which can be incorporated easily into the daily life of working age adults. From March 2018, the 1st campaign will start to recommend wearing an outfit that is easy to walk in (e.g., recommendation of commuting using sneakers, leather shoes with thick soles, and a backpack). The goal of this campaign is an increase by 1,000 steps a day more than usual. The “FUN+WALK PROJECT” will improve public awareness of the project itself by livening up the national mood through collaborations

with private companies and organizations. With the aim of examining the effects of physical activities *2 on the maintenance and promotion of the health of people as well as developing methods for their promotion, the JAEE endorses the “FUN+WALK PROJECT” and cooperates with the project actively, especially taking into account of the importance of evaluation and verification.

3. Background of the statement

In 2010, the WHO published an international recommendation on physical activities to promote health for policymakers at the international level *3. In 2012, the Lancet, one of the world’s top-level medical journals, ran a feature article *4 on physical inactivity. The article reported that: physical inactivity is becoming a global pandemic, they have similar negative health effects to those of smoking, and 5.3 million people around the world die every year due to physical inactivity. The second report of the feature article *5 published in the Lancet in 2016 is seriously concerned that there have been few improvements in the above-mentioned situation: physical inactivity across the world, and points out that it is necessary to collaborate with financial circles and many different sectors and improve measures to address this problem.

Based on the evidence from the ecological model *6, arrangement of environment is expected to promote physical activity at the population level and to help programs targeting individuals to work effectively through its impact over many people. The “FUN+WALK PROJECT” is a unique nation-wide campaign utilizing collaborations across diverse departments involving environment improvement for physical activity and sports activity. This project is expected to increase physical activity at the population level. If an

increase of 1,000 steps per day (10 min increase in duration of physical activity), the primary objective of this project, is achieved, it is expected to result in 3% to 4% risk reductions in non-communicable diseases and mortality. Moreover, if getting an additional 1,000 steps a day in many people is achieved, average number of steps at the national level would certainly shift to a higher level and a large effect can be expected including a reduction in the national health expenditure. However, many previous studies have shown that promoting physical activity in the whole population is a very difficult task. To ensure the campaign has truly beneficial effects in our society, long-term efforts are needed in evaluation and verification of the campaign and in regular program improvement based on the evidence from strategy of physical activity promotion.

Regarding the tobacco epidemic, evidence-based countermeasures against tobacco smoking have successfully worked in many countries. In the same way, to solve the problem of the physical inactivity epidemic, the JAEE considers the necessity for the implementation of effective public health programs based on the evidence from exercise epidemiology and for utilizing various kinds of approaches. In this context, the JAEE has issued an official statement on the endorsement of the Japan Sports Agency's "FUN+WALK PROJECT" and will actively cooperate with the project.

4. JAEE's involvement

The JAEE is an academic association aimed at the maintenance and promotion of population health by enhancing epidemiological studies on physical activity, exercise, and health, and providing feedback on the

research findings to the society. The JAEE will contribute to the goal achievement of the project through providing evidence on physical activity and health, offering lecturers for events, and participating in the management and evaluation of the project from a position of advisor and commissioner.

5. Terminology and reference

*1 FUN+WALK PROJECT

<http://funpluswalk.go.jp/>



The logo for the FUN+WALK PROJECT. It features the words "FUN+WALK" in a large, bold, sans-serif font. To the right of "WALK", the word "PROJECT" is written vertically in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font.

*2 Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activities can be classified into daily life activities, such as work and commuting, and exercise performed systematically and continuously to maintain and improve physical fitness.

*3 http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599979_eng.pdf

*4 <http://www.thelancet.com/series/physical-activity>

*5 <http://www.thelancet.com/series/physical-activity-2016>

*6 Health behavior itself is practiced by each individual. However, individual's behavior is determined by interactive effects of factors at the individual, interpersonal, community, environmental, and policy levels. Ecological model emphasizes the importance of considering approaches to these multi-layered factors when implementing an intervention.