

A Preliminary Analysis of Medical Expenditures Among Active and Sedentary US Adults With Mental Disorders

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Objective: To determine whether leisure-time physical activity is associated with lower direct annual medical expenditures among a sample of adults with mental disorders. **Methods:** Using the 1995 National Health Interview Survey and 1996 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, differences between medical expenditures for sedentary and active persons were analyzed using t-tests. **Results:** The per capita annual direct medical expenditure was

\$2785 higher for sedentary than for active persons ($P < 0.05$). The total expenditure associated with sedentary behavior was \$31.7 billion (\$19.1 billion in men; \$12.6 billion in women). **Conclusions:** Physical activity is associated with a reduced economic burden among people with mental disorders.

Key words: exercise, inactivity, mental health, mental illness, medical costs

Am J Health Behav. 2005;29(3):195-205
