

Elsevier Editorial System(tm) for Public Health  
Manuscript Draft

Manuscript Number: PUHE-D-14-00311

Title: Physical Activity Promotion in 2014-The Tour de France: A Local Perspective

Article Type: Letter to the Editor

Keywords: Physical activity, Public Health, Cycling, Tour de France

Corresponding Author: Dr. Andrew Richard Pringle, Ph.D

Corresponding Author's Institution: Leeds Metropolitan University

First Author: Andrew Richard Pringle, Ph.D

Order of Authors: Andrew Richard Pringle, Ph.D; Stephen Zwolinsky, B.Sc

Abstract: Stoner and colleagues refer to 'cycle friendly cities' within their visionary paper what will physical activity look like in 2025 [Public Health 128, 2014: 395e396]. Their paper prompted us to reflect on more current day developments for cycling and physical activity promotion closer to home. In 2014, the Tour de France comes to Yorkshire, UK and in the lead authors home City, York. In our letter to the Editor, we reflect on the issues of promoting physical activity using the Tour de France, notably the recruitment of sedentary and inactive populations.

Physical Activity Promotion in 2014-The Tour de France: A Local Perspective.

Dear Editor,

Stoner and colleagues refer to 'cycle friendly cities' within their visionary paper for physical activity in 2025 [1] and their short communication prompted me to reflect on more current day developments for cycling and physical activity promotion closer to home. In 2014, the Tour de France comes to Yorkshire, and my [the first author] home City of York, 'the Tour' will pass by the 'end of my street' as it heads out on the route to the Yorkshire Dales. [2] The 'Tour' has been seen as offering a great opportunity for the promotion of physical, social and mental health, including physical activity. While enjoying the spectacle of the peloton winding its ways through the neighbourhood [2], I wonder how many non-cyclists, and sedentary and inactive people have been inspired to become more physically active as a result of 'the Tour'? In supporting cycling leading up and during the visit of 'the Tour', a number of interventions have been set up, including a festival of 'cycling themed social and cultural activities [3]. In many cases, patrons are encouraged to make their way to events on their cycles. For those new to cycling, activities also include taster events; mass participation rides and motivational interviewing sessions which assess and support individual's preparedness to cycle. These events, along with other activities have been dovetailed into the City's strategic approach to cycling and interventions have been supported by a broad range of partners [4]. Delivering these events poses many logistical challenges for those local agencies, but it is when the 'Tour' has moved on, that most significant challenges exist. That is, (i) how to encourage those infrequent cyclists to cycle more often and (ii) how to encourage sedentary and inactive individuals to take up and sustain physical activities, such as cycling on a regular basis. Such impacts are not only important for increasing physical activity levels and the health of the local population [5], but also can potentially help improve the local environment by reducing the build-up of motor vehicle traffic in city centres. Indeed, reductions in congestion are surely dependent on modal shift? As such, increases in the proportion of people taking up active modes of transportation, such as cycling, are important from a public health perspective. It is important that promotional efforts focus on the recruitment of those constituents who are 'new' to physical activity and active modes of transport such as cycling. [6] Notwithstanding City-wide efforts to promote cycling [2-4], some local initiatives, (*including the installation of cycle lanes on which 'the Tour' will traverse for a short distance*), have failed to show that 'non cyclists' have been recruited to the behaviour as a result of the intervention. [6-7]. With the strapline '*Be Part of It*' emblazoned on promotional literature for 'the Tour' [2], it is important that the demographic profile of participants and the number of sedentary and inactive groups recruited along with the level of changes in physical activity (including cycling), are included in the monitoring and evaluation strategy. These impacts must form part of the statements of the effect and effectiveness of the 'Tour de France' in promoting physical activity locally in the City. In doing so, we will have a better understanding of who was and continues to be 'part of it'!

## References

1. Stoner L, Tarrant M, Wadsworth D. What will physical activity look like in 2025? Public Health 128, 2014: 395e396
2. City of York Council. Tour de France: The route. City of York Council, York. Available at: [http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200721/tour\\_de\\_france/1269/the\\_route](http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200721/tour_de_france/1269/the_route). [Accessed May 14 2014].
3. City of York Council. Sport and Active Leisure: Cycling. City of York Council, York, 2014. Available at: [http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200788/cycling/1004/cycling\\_training\\_and\\_learning](http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200788/cycling/1004/cycling_training_and_learning). [Accessed May 14 2014].
4. City of York Council. York be part of it. Festival of events. City of York Council, York, 2014 Available at: [http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200721/tour\\_de\\_france/1268/be\\_part\\_of\\_it](http://www.york.gov.uk/info/200721/tour_de_france/1268/be_part_of_it). [Accessed May 14 2014].
5. Department of Health. Start Active, Stay Active: A report on physical Activity for health from the four home countries' Chief Medical Officers. London: Crown, 2011.
6. Pringle A., Zwolinsky, S. No effects without side effects. Perspectives in Public Health, (in press).
7. Decision Session: Executive member of City Strategy: Report for the Director of City Strategy. Water End Cycle Scheme Evaluation. Available at: <http://democracy.york.gov.uk/documents/s40094/EMDS%20Water%20End%20Cycle%20Scheme%20Evaluation%20Report%20Final%20v6%2001-06-10.pdf>. [Accessed March 26 2014].

Dr Andy Pringle (FRSPH) and Stephen Zwolinsky

Research Centre for Active Lifestyles, Leeds Metropolitan University, LEEDS, LS6 3QS.

Email: [a.pringle@leedsmet.ac.uk](mailto:a.pringle@leedsmet.ac.uk)