

**The Relation Between Self-Reported Activity and Fitness Levels in Primary Care**  
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Establishing physical activity as a standard in healthcare is a major objective of the American College of Sports Medicine *Exercise is Medicine* initiative. Yet, few primary care physicians (PCP) routinely assess the fitness of patients. Thus, providing patients with an exercise prescription that can be tailored for their physical activity needs remains a challenge. **PURPOSE:** To examine the relation between self-reported cardiorespiratory exercise participation and cardiorespiratory fitness in patients visiting their PCP.

**METHODS:** All patients who underwent a medical exam at a primary care practice between June and August 2015 were enrolled in this study. Each patient was asked whether he participates in cardiorespiratory exercise and to report the number of sessions per week, as well as the duration (minutes) and intensity (perceived exertion) of each session. A YMCA bike protocol was administered to estimate  $VO_{2max}$ . **RESULTS:** Ninety patients (age  $65 \pm 12$  years; 24% women) completed all aspects of the study. Forty two percent of patients reported no participation in cardiorespiratory exercise. As expected, the estimated  $VO_{2max}$  was higher among patients who participated in cardiorespiratory exercise compared to those who did not participate (Yes:  $30.0 \pm 9.9$   $ml \cdot kg^{-1} \cdot min^{-1}$  vs. No:  $26.2 \pm 8.4$   $ml \cdot kg^{-1} \cdot min^{-1}$ ;  $p=0.06$ ). A higher estimated  $VO_{2max}$  was associated with a greater number of sessions per week ( $r= 0.22$ ,  $p=0.04$ ) and intensity per session ( $r=0.32$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). **CONCLUSION:** We found a strong relation between higher amounts of self-reported cardiorespiratory exercise and increased cardiorespiratory fitness among patients visiting their PCP. Whether increasing knowledge of the fitness levels of patients facilitates the promotion of and adherence to physical activity warrants further investigation.