

PRESS RELEASE 新聞稿

Hospital Authority Building, 147B, Argyle Street, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Sunday, 21 April 2002

HA Health InfoWorld Announces Survey Findings on Physical Exercise and Health

A survey conducted by the “Better Health for a Better Hong Kong” Campaign found that 80% of the working class of Hong Kong have inadequate physical exercise. The large-scale territory-wide Campaign is a joint venture on health promotion between the Health InfoWorld of Hospital Authority (HA) and the Li Ka Shing Foundation.

As one of the highlight programmes of the “Better Health for a Better Hong Kong” Campaign, the Health InfoWorld organised a major event today (21 April) to raise public awareness and understanding of the healthy lifestyle of “Mental Wellness, Regular Exercise and Balanced Diet”. Around 200 participants took part in today’s “Healthy Walking with Ten Thousand Steps” Programme, walking around the Hospital Authority Building and the Kowloon Hospital Rehabilitation Building with the aim to experience the health benefits of daily exercise through walking for ten thousand steps.

The results of a health survey on the relationship between physical exercise and health were also announced today. The survey was conducted from November 2000 to March 2002 by interviewing 4,826 Hong Kong people from the working class with a set of standardised questionnaires.

The survey found that 80% of the working class of Hong Kong have inadequate physical exercise. Inadequate physical exercise refers to a failure to do medium-strength exercise such as jogging or swimming for three days or more per week, with each exercise session lasting 30 minutes or more. Compared to men, 8% more women do not do any physical exercise. The findings also indicated that the number of older adults (>60 years old) who have adequate physical exercise is two times that of younger adults (<35 years old).

As regards the relationship between life pattern and physical exercise of the working class, the survey found that one’s activeness in doing exercise is not related to one’s life pattern including work, sleeping, travelling or rest hours. Prof Stanley Hui, an advisor of the Health InfoWorld and a sports scientist, said, “The findings show very clearly that ‘being busy’ cannot be an excuse for people not doing exercise. What matters really is people’s determination.”

Dr Gary Ko, another advisor of the Health InfoWorld, pointed out that the survey also found that there was a close relationship between the volume of physical exercise and one's mental health. Those having inadequate physical exercise are mentally more unhealthy than those having adequate physical exercise. The former group has a 20% to 60% higher chance than the latter in developing negative mental attitudes.

Prof Hui recommended that people should grasp the opportunity of doing physical exercise and make this practice part of their daily life. He said that according to overseas experience, walking ten thousand steps each day will greatly reduce the chance of developing serious diseases. An office worker walks an average of around five to six thousand steps in his/her normal daily life each day. If he/she can take out 30 minutes each day to walk an additional five to six thousand steps, the ten thousand steps target can be achieved.

Prof Hui also offered the following advice to the public:

- (1) To do medium-strength exercise such as swimming or jogging for three days or more per week, with each exercise session lasting 30 minutes or more;
- (2) To shorten the time of sitting during office hours and find opportunities to do work which involves some exercise;
- (3) To walk for 30 minutes when going to work, going off duty or during afternoon break;
- (4) To arrange one-hour's exercise with family members when having family gatherings during weekends.

The five-year "Better Health for a Better Hong Kong" Campaign was funded with \$ 10 million by the Li Ka Shing Foundation. It targets at the mass general public with the objectives of long-term health promotion and education. The campaign has also gained very enthusiastic support from many labour organisations. Academic surveys and studies would also be conducted to collect health information as well as to accumulate relevant experiences for the development of an evidence-based and feasible model of health promotion, thus contributing to the formulation of health care policies. The results of the surveys and studies, in parallel with the health promotion activities organised by the Health InfoWorld, would also help raise public awareness and understanding of the benefits of a healthy and happy lifestyle. Results of health surveys will continue to be announced in the coming year.

* * * * *