

Heart health danger highlighted as global survey finds one in four people report not knowing how much they walk each day

More than half who do know are walking less than the recommended minimum 30 minutes

Geneva, Switzerland (26 September, 2013) – More than a quarter of people who took part in a new multi-country survey said they did not know how much time they spent briskly walking at a speed faster than normal. As the World Health Organization reports that global levels of physical activity are declining¹, the six country survey reveals that between 14 and 37 per cent² of adults don't pay any attention to one of the simplest things most of us can do to protect our heart health – walking.

On World Heart Day, 29 September, the World Heart Federation is calling on men, women and children of all age groups to increase their physical activity in order to protect their heart health and reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD), including heart disease and stroke.

Dr Kathryn Taubert, Chief Science Officer, World Heart Federation, said: *“Awareness is the first step to a healthy heart. Paying attention to how much we walk should be as simple as watching what we eat. On World Heart Day, we are urging people to take action to protect their hearts. By reaching the recommended guideline of minimum 30 minutes of moderate exercise, which includes brisk walking at least five days a week, many premature deaths can be prevented.”*

The new multi-national survey conducted in Brazil, China, India, Spain, UK and USA by the World Heart Federation reveals that²:

- Around one in three adults in the US and UK are not aware of how much they walk each day compared to only one in six people in India
- Overall, in the six countries that were surveyed, 55 per cent of people who reported times, do less than 30 minutes of brisk walking on a typical day
- People in the US and UK reported that they do less brisk walking than those in developing nations – two thirds of respondents in the US and UK who reported their walking times do less than 30 minutes of brisk walking, on a typical day, whereas less than half of adults in Brazil and India do the same.

In an age of smartphones and fitness tracking devices, it has never been easier to keep track of personal fitness. Studies have shown that people who wear pedometers increase their physical activity by almost 27 per cent.³

In celebration of this year's World Heart Day on 29 September, the World Heart Federation and Bupa, a leading international healthcare group, are launching a new global challenge and free walking app, to encourage people to get walking and keep walking. Entitled *Ground Miles*, the challenge will help to motivate people to take care of their heart health, while the app provides them with a tool to count the distance that they walk and reach their physical activity goals.

Johanna Ralston, CEO, World Heart Federation said: *"We want to get people around the world walking, to reduce their risk of developing cardiovascular disease, including heart disease and stroke. Our goal is to encourage people to collectively walk 5 million miles (8 million kilometres) by the end of this year."*

Awareness around CVD risk factors such as physical inactivity, unhealthy eating, overweight/obesity and tobacco use is the first stage towards preventing the risk of heart disease and stroke. Regular moderate exercise – such as walking, cycling, or participating in sports – has many health benefits for the heart. Walking in particular is one of the least expensive and most broadly accessible forms of physical activity in the world. By reaching the recommended goal of minimum 30 minutes a day, five times a week of moderate exercise, the World Heart Federation says people can:

- Increase life expectancy – even 15 minutes a day of moderate exercise (which includes brisk walking) can have significant health benefits, adding up to three years to life expectancy⁴
- Significantly reduce the risk of CVD – studies have shown reductions as high as 11 per cent⁵
- Burn more fat than jogging – running an hour per day reduces the risk of heart disease by nearly five per cent; however people who expended the same amount of energy walking per day can reduce the risk of heart disease by more than nine per cent.⁶

"Your feet can carry your heart very far in life", summarised Dr Srinath Reddy, President, World Heart Federation.

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Notes to Editors

About the survey

The survey was conducted online by YouGov on behalf of the World Heart Federation in Brazil, China, India, Spain, UK and USA, with a total sample size of 7,367 adults aged 18+ in August 2013, weighted to be nationally representative of each market. The survey asked respondents two questions: 1) On a typical day, approximately how much time would you estimate you spend casually walking at a slow/normal pace? And 2) On a typical day, approximately how much time would you estimate you spend briskly walking at a speed faster than normal? The calculations have been made against respondents' answers to the brisk walking question.

About World Heart Day

World Heart Day was created by the World Heart Federation in 2000 to inform people around the globe that heart disease and stroke are the world's leading cause of death, claiming 17.3 million lives each year. On 29 September each year, together with its members, the World Heart Federation aims to drive action to educate people that by controlling risk factors such as tobacco use, unhealthy diet and physical inactivity, at least 80 per cent of premature deaths from heart disease and stroke could be avoided. World Heart Day unites people from all countries and backgrounds in the fight against the CVD burden, and inspires and drives international action to encourage heart-healthy living across the world. The theme for this year's World Heart Day, 'Take the road to a healthy heart,' will focus on the 'life-course approach' to the prevention and control of CVD amongst all age groups, with a focus on women and children, as healthy children lead to healthy adults and healthy adults lead to healthy families and communities. The main aim is to educate people that the threat of heart disease can begin at any age, and that people's risk increases with exposure to risk factors such as unhealthy diet or exposure to tobacco smoke. Unless people are aware and action is taken to enable heart-healthy living, CVD will remain the single leading cause of death worldwide and, by 2030, will be responsible for 23.6 million deaths each year⁷. More information about World Heart Day is available at www.worldheartday.org; www.facebook.com/worldheartday and #worldheartday

World Heart Day is financially supported by unrestricted educational grants from: Astra Zeneca, Bayer HealthCare, Bristol-Myers Squibb, Bupa, Pfizer, Schiller.

About the World Heart Federation

The World Heart Federation is dedicated to leading the global fight against heart disease and stroke, with a focus on low- and middle-income countries, via a united community of more than 200 member organizations that brings together the strength of cardiac societies and heart foundations from more than



100 countries. It aligns its efforts around the WHO-related target of a 25 per cent reduction in premature CVD mortality by 2025. With its members, the World Heart Federation works to build global commitment to addressing cardiovascular health at the policy level, generates and exchanges ideas, shares best practice, advances scientific knowledge and promotes knowledge transfer. to tackle CVD– the world's number one killer. Through our collective efforts we can help people all over the world to lead longer and better heart-healthy lives. For more information, please visit: www.worldheart.org; www.facebook.com/worldheartfederation and twitter.com/worldheartfed

About the *Ground Miles Challenge*

The World Heart Federation and Bupa have formed a global partnership to get the world walking, to help reduce their risk of cardiovascular disease (which includes heart disease and stroke). On World Heart Day they are launching a global walking challenge called *Ground Miles*. The global target is to walk 5 million miles (8 million kilometres). The World Heart Federation and Bupa are urging people to download, for free, a new *Ground Miles app* to spur them on and measure the distance they walk. People who download the app will have the chance to win prizes along the way. To download the app, search for '*Ground Miles*' in your Apple or Android app store or for more information, please visit: www.worldheart.org/groundmiles or www.bupa.com/heart

The World Heart Federation's 200+ member organizations and Bupa's 62,000 employees, worldwide, will walk and encourage their friends, families, colleagues and communities to help reach this target. When the 5 million mile mark is reached, Bupa will provide funding to the World Heart Federation that will be used to support programmes that protect thousands of children in Africa and South Asia from heart failure and early death, as a result of Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD).

About Bupa

Bupa's purpose is longer, healthier, happier lives. A leading international healthcare group, Bupa serves more than 14 million customers in more than 190 countries. It offers personal and company-financed health insurance and medical subscription products, runs hospitals, provides workplace health services, home healthcare, health assessments and chronic disease management services. Bupa is also a major international provider of nursing and residential care for elderly people. With no shareholders, the company invests its profits to provide more and better healthcare and fulfil their purpose. Bupa employs more than 62,000 people, principally in the UK, Australia, Spain, Poland, New Zealand and the USA, as well as Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, India, Thailand, China and across Latin America. For more information, visit: www.bupa.com.

References



¹ Harvard School of Public Health, Physical Activity, accessed; <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/obesity-prevention-source/obesity-causes/physical-activity-and-obesity/>

² World Heart Federation [data on file]

³ Bravata DM, 'Using pedometers to increase physical activity and improve health: a systematic review.' JAMA. 2007 Nov 21;298(19):2296-304.

⁴ C3 Collaborating for Health, The benefits of regular walking for health, well-being and the environment, 2012

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⁶ Williams PT. 'Greater weight loss from running than walking during a 6.2-yr prospective follow-up.' Med Sci Sports Exerc. 2013 Apr;45(4):706-13.

⁷ Mathers CD, Loncar D, 'Projections of global mortality and burden of disease from 2002 to 2030.' PLoS Med, 2006, 3(11):e442.