



*MEDIA RELEASE: AVAILABLE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

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## **Impact of physical inactivity akin to smoking**

**Physical inactivity should be given equal priority to smoking and alcohol abuse by healthcare professionals claims a report to be issued tomorrow (Thursday 15 January 2015) by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow.**

Questions about whether you smoke and the amount of alcohol you consume are routinely asked at medical assessments. Today, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow have called for questions about physical activity to be added to the mix.

Physical inactivity is believed to account for more than five million deaths around the world every year – equivalent to the number of deaths caused by smoking. It is estimated that about 63% of all deaths worldwide are a result of diseases such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes and cancers – all of which have been linked to physical inactivity. And, globally levels of physical activity are decreasing.

Clinical Leadership Fellow at the College, Dr Andrew Murray said, “Physical inactivity is a major public health burden in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. It is essential that measures to help people get more active more often are integrated to all levels of medical care from regular visits to the GP to advice given following surgical procedures.

“We know that regular physical activity is good for both physical and mental health and can help to prevent more than 40 chronic diseases, yet currently we do not routinely ask patients whether or not they do any exercise. We are calling for this to change.”

President of the College, Dr Frank Dunn CBE said, “Increasing physical activity must be given equal priority to smoking cessation and addressing harmful use of alcohol. Despite the serious impact of physical inactivity on health, current strategies for helping people to become more active falls far behind the support given to people to quit smoking, for example. Yet, small changes in a person’s level of activity can significantly impact on their health – for example, we know that just 30 minutes of exercise daily can reduce mortality by 30%.”

The College has submitted a report and recommendations to the Scottish Government and other stakeholders calling for physical activity to be incorporated into all levels of patient management. This includes questions about a patient’s levels of physical activity being asked alongside questions about whether they smoke or drink, as well as plans to incorporate physical activity into the curriculum for doctors in training.



## ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF GLASGOW

The College has already commenced organising events for healthcare professionals on the importance of physical inactivity. Last year, they held a major two day international conference which focused on the role of physical activity for health. Currently, they are working on e-learning material for the profession, and developing assessments for medical and surgical examinations.

In their report, the College stress the importance of health professionals leading by example and being role models for physical activity. In order to achieve this, they call for health boards to support their staff with simple challenges, walking routes, and even providing showers where possible.

The full report can be accessed here: INSERT LINK

*The launch of this report has been timed to coincide with an event on “Diabetes and Endocrinology” being held in the College on Thursday 15 January 2015. Physical inactivity is a known factor in the causes of type 2 diabetes.*

Images available on request:

- Dr Andrew Murray
- Dr Frank Dunn,
- Images from the College organised “Clinicians on the Clyde 5k run”

### **Contact:**

Please contact Elaine Mulcahy on 0141 221 6072 or [media@rcpsg.ac.uk](mailto:media@rcpsg.ac.uk) to arrange an interview

### **Notes to editors:**

The **Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow** is the only multidisciplinary Royal College in the UK. Its membership, which exceeds 11,000, includes physicians, surgeons, dental practitioners, travel medicine and podiatric medicine professionals. The College provides career support to the membership through education, training, professional development, examinations and assessment whilst acting as a charity and leading voice on health issues in order to set the highest possible standards of health care.