

CYPRUS

PREVALENCE (%) OF ADULTS THAT ENGAGED IN
MODERATE- AND VIGOROUS-INTENSITY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY
FROM EUROBAROMETER, 2014

%	ADULTS*	
	MODERATE-INTENSITY**	VIGOROUS-INTENSITY**
BOTH SEXES	12	14

* The country accepts the use of Eurobarometer in this factsheet, but does not validate it.

** moderate- and vigorous-intensity physical activity on at least 4 days within the past 7 days.

Total population: 858 000

Median age: 36.8 years

Life expectancy at birth males: 80.1 years

Life expectancy at birth females: 85.0 years

GDP per capita: €19 000

GDP spent on health: 7.4% (1)



Monitoring and surveillance

Physical activity in adults

According to a Eurobarometer study from 2014 (2)¹, 14% of adults reported engaging in vigorous-intensity physical activity at least 4 days out of the past 7, with 84% of them doing more than 30 minutes each time. Moreover, 12% of adults reported that they carried out moderate-intensity physical activity on at least 4 of the past 7 days, with 63% doing so for longer than 30 minutes on each occasion.

Cyprus does not currently have a health monitoring and surveillance system that includes population-based measures of physical activity. Neither does the country have recommendations on physical activity.

Data from the WHO Global Health Observatory (GHO) from 2010 for the Cypriot adult population (aged 18+ years) (3)¹ show that 64.7% meet WHO's *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health* (2010) (4), with males being significantly more active (70.7%) than females (58.5%).

Physical activity in children and adolescents

No data are available on physical activity levels among Cypriot children and adolescents. Neither the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study nor the WHO GHO 2010 data contained information for these population groups in Cyprus.

Policy response

Major policy documents adopted by governmental bodies

In 1985, the Cyprus Sports Organisation adopted a Sports for All policy. This specifically addresses Sports for All promotion. The programme involves more than 300 sports centres and has 11 000 members from all age groups. It is intended to encourage people to become more involved in sports, to promote health "for joy, sensibility, recreation, fitness and health purposes" (5). While much of the work of the programme is carried out in preschools to encourage fitness from an early age, specialized programmes also exist, including rhythmic gymnastics and judo, as well as swimming classes. There is also provision for preschool education, adults, older adults and individuals with special needs.

Guidelines and goals

Cyprus is currently in the initial stages of drafting national recommendations on physical activity and health which are envisaged to be implemented by the end of 2015. It is anticipated that these national recommendations will be based on the WHO's *Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health* (2010) (4) and those of the American College of Sports Medicine (6).

¹ The country accepts the use of Eurobarometer and GHO data in this factsheet, but does not validate it.

Table 1 presents a summary of the key measures in place to monitor and address physical activity in Cyprus.

Table 1. Summary of key physical activity initiatives in Cyprus

HEALTH	SPORTS	EDUCATION	TRANSPORT	MONITORING	GUIDELINES
Counselling on physical activity as part of primary health care services	Existence of a national Sports for All policy(ies)	Mandatory physical activity in primary and secondary schools	National or subnational schemes promoting active travel to school and/or workplace	Physical activity included in the national health monitoring system or separate routine survey	Existence of national recommendation on physical activity
NO	YES	YES	NO	NO*	YES*

* Envisaged to be implemented in the near future.

Additional information on action in key areas

Sports in schools

It is compulsory for primary schools to provide at least 90 minutes of scheduled physical education (PE) per week. In secondary schools this increases to 135 minutes of PE per week (on average).

Successful approaches

Programmes for children with special needs

The Cyprus Sports Organisation ensures the implementation of special programmes for people from the Cyprus School for the Blind and students of the Nicosia, Larnaca and Famagusta special schools, putting into practice its Sports for All policy and philosophy with a view to offering equal sporting opportunities to all individuals, irrespective of their gender, age, social position or any form of disability (5).

Cyprus Sports Medicine and Research Centre

Cyprus Sports Medicine and Research Centre is the only scientific centre for sport research in Cyprus and is run by the Cyprus Sport Organisation. It focuses on the development of scientific research in the field of sports medicine, sports science, physical activity and PE. The centre works closely with many academic institutions and scientific centres, both locally and abroad, examining and evaluating through its research the physical fitness of the adult population of Cyprus. Studies have included cardiovascular capacity, muscle strength and power, body composition and flexibility.

The centre has also conducted research into factors that might encourage greater levels of physical activity among the population. The results suggest that such measures could include the construction of more sports facilities (both indoor and outdoor), the construction of pedestrian pathways and cycle paths, more organized and supervised exercise programmes, more information concerning the effects and benefits of physical activity and exercise, and measures to reduce the cost of using sports facilities (7).

References

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6. American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), AHA support federal physical activity guidelines [website]. Indianapolis: American College of Sports Medicine; 2011 (<https://www.acsm.org/about-acsm/media-room/acsm-in-the-news/2011/08/01/acsm-aha-support-federal-physicalactivity-guidelines>, accessed 5 June 2015)
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8. Cyprus Sports Medicine & Research Centre (KAEK) [website]. Nicosia: Cyprus Sports Organisation; 2012 (<http://cyprussports.org/en/index.php/template/lorem-ipsum-ii/cyprus-sports-medicine-a-research-centre>, accessed 24 August 2015).