

Pathways to Prevention (P2P) Program

Pathways to Prevention Workshop: Can Physical Activity Improve the Health of Wheelchair Users?

Summary of the Panel's Final Report

Based on the information presented during this workshop, the independent workshop panel recommends that organizations and scientists working on research on physical activity for people who use wheeled mobility devices (such as wheelchairs and scooters):

- **Focus on What Matters Most to Wheeled Mobility Device Users**
 - Measure results that are important to people who are wheeled mobility device users. For example, how does physical activity change someone's ability to be independent, manage pain, or take part in family and community events?
 - Involve wheeled mobility device users, their families, and care providers in the research planning process. Include them in decisions about research questions, study design, and intervention strategies.
- **Make it Easier To Use Research Findings in the Real World**
 - When planning research, think about how people will use the results in real-world settings.
 - Do the people in the study reflect the broader population of wheeled mobility device users?
 - Have people with advanced illness and disability been included?
 - Is the equipment used available outside the lab or research setting? Is it affordable for most people?
 - How will issues like insurance coverage affect someone's ability to use or access the intervention?
 - Consider virtual or telehealth options to reach more people.
- **Improve the Research Infrastructure**
 - Create standard measures to be used across studies.
 - Develop a national database where researchers can share and access information.
 - Offer or build on funding opportunities that encourage different agencies or sites to work together and support larger studies that track long-term results.
 - Train new scientists to work on research that meets the needs of people who use wheeled mobility devices.

For a full list of research recommendations, read the [Panel's Final Report](#).

About the Workshop

The Pathways to Prevention (P2P) Workshop: [Can Physical Activity Improve the Health of Wheelchair Users?](#) took place on December 1–3, 2020. The goal of the workshop was to find and fill research gaps in physical activity interventions for people who use wheeled mobility devices.

The 2010 census estimated that 3.6 million Americans use a wheeled mobility device. Individuals who use wheeled mobility devices often experience worse health outcomes and face barriers to getting enough physical activity. Physical activity may improve the overall health, workforce participation, independence, and quality of life of wheeled mobility device users. However, there are gaps in what scientists know about the types, amount, and duration of exercise that are safe and effective.

The workshop was co-sponsored by the *Eunice Kennedy Shriver* National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research, National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, and NIH Office of Disease Prevention (ODP).

About the Workshop Panel

Each P2P workshop has an independent panel of five to six members with diverse professional and personal perspectives. Panel members attend the workshop, where they listen to and ask questions about presentations from expert speakers. The panelists then write a report that summarizes the workshop and highlights research gaps and future priorities. The recommendations in the panel's report are for use by the broader research community. Panel reports are not policy statements of the NIH or the federal government.

The panel for the P2P Workshop: Can Physical Activity Improve the Health of Wheelchair Users? included the following members:

- Jerry H. Gurwitz, M.D. (Workshop & Panel Chair)
- Noelle Carlozzi, Ph.D., M.S.
- Kirsten K. Davison, Ph.D., M.S.
- Kelly R. Evenson, Ph.D.
- Darrell J. Gaskin, Ph.D., M.S.
- Boris D. Lushniak, M.D., M.P.H.

The panel members' [full bios](#) are available on the ODP website.

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