

## COMMENTARY

The health benefits of physical activity should be made available to all groups in the population, including both women and men. It is not self evident, however, that various health outcomes are influenced equally by physical activity in women and men. Until recently, a lack of scientific data has hampered these kinds of comparisons. However, during the past few years, a number of major studies have focused on various health outcomes of physical activity in women. In this article, the findings of a thorough semiquantitative review of 38 epidemiological studies on the association of physical activity and all cause mortality in women are presented. They indicate that physical activity reduces the risk of premature death in women by one third—that is, to the same degree as in men. This association was seen in both younger and older (>65 years) women, and both leisure time and non-recreational or occupational physical activity were effective. Significant risk reduction can be obtained by adhering to current physical activity guidelines or generating at least 4200 kJ (1000 kcal) a week energy expenditure in physical activity. This summary of current evidence is in good agreement with that presented in another recent review<sup>1</sup> and is clinically important because it confirms that we can recommend and promote physical activity for health for both women and men largely on the same basis.

<sup>1</sup> Lee I-M, Skerrett PJ. Physical activity and all-cause mortality: what is the dose-response relation? *Med Sci Sports Exerc* 2001;**33**:S459–71.