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Poster: Inactivity in the NHS workforce: barriers and determinants to physical activity among pre-registered nurses

BLAKE H., HALLETT S.

Background: The health of NHS employees is high on the UK public health agenda. Nurses are perceived by the general population as role models for health, although many do not follow the guidelines they recommend to their patients. Perceived barriers to exercise in this health educated group are not known. This study investigated the barriers to and facilitators of physical activity in pre- registered nurses.

Methods: 469 pre-registered nurses completed a questionnaire survey between July-Sept 2010. Measures included physical activity readiness on the Stages of Change Scale, the Self-efficacy for Exercise Scale, The Benefits and Barriers to Exercise Scale, and the Social Support for Exercise Scale.

Results: Just under half of the sample did not meet government recommendations for physical activity and so were not active enough to benefit their health. Those with higher self-efficacy for exercise ($p < .001$), and those with an increased level of support from family ($p < .05$) and friends ($p < .001$) were more physically active. Those who perceived greater benefits and fewer barriers to exercise were more likely to be active ($p < .001$).

Conclusions: Interventions should be developed to increase physical activity levels in pre-registered nurses in order that healthy lifestyle behaviours are adopted early in the nursing career. Interventions should focus on increasing exercise self-efficacy and social support, and reducing perceived barriers to exercise participation in pre-registered nurses.