

PACE Canada

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The critical role that physical activity plays in preventing and treating chronic diseases, such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, obesity, certain cancers, osteoporosis, and other debilitating conditions, is undisputed. Moreover, physical activity helps maintain functional capacity and independent living throughout older adulthood. Physicians are a primary source of health care and information for Canadians, and as such, are ideally situated to advise Canadians on how to become more active and achieve better health.

PACE Canada is a program designed to assist physicians in effectively advising their patients about how to increase physical activity safely. Adopting a patient-centred approach, this program is tailored to the Canadian health care system and culture. Internationally recognized and developed by a team of physicians, leading health researchers, and behavioural scientists, Patient-Centered Assessment and Counseling for Exercise and Nutrition (PACE) has been demonstrated to be effective in helping patients move toward more healthy active living and to be acceptable to primary care providers, office staff, and patients alike.

Short and simple

PACE Canada incorporates Health Canada's physical activity and healthy eating guidelines and is based on proven behaviour-change techniques. It also addresses important barriers to physician counseling, requiring only 2 to 5 minutes of a provider's time to administer. The intervention consists of four simple steps:

- select and inform patients,
- administer assessment,
- advise patients, and
- follow up with patients.

PACE Canada has been endorsed by the College of Family Physicians of Canada.

Where to find PACE Canada

PACE Canada resources are available through the PACE Canada website (www.pace-canada.org) or from the offices of the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute. Produced in the form of a "tool kit," resources included in PACE Canada cover the latest research on physical activity, nutrition and health, and provide practical direction on addressing several case scenarios and patient barriers.

Since Family Medicine Forum 2000, physicians also have had the opportunity to learn about effectively advising patients on physical activity and health through accredited PACE Canada workshops provided at the annual Forums. Now this opportunity has been made available on-line. The on-line facility includes electronic versions of the tool kit; detailed descriptions of the intervention procedures; and interactive learning modules designed to provide physicians with the necessary background and skills to advise and assist their patients effectively in moving toward more healthy, active lifestyles. Developed to meet increasing demand for training in PACE Canada procedures, the on-line facility ensures that all Canadian providers have ready access to resources and training.

Composed of six self-paced units, the learning module can be completed in one longer session or several shorter sessions of 20 to 40 minutes each. An interactive group learning module is also currently being developed and will be available in the fall of 2002. Those who complete either the individual or the group learning module can apply for CME MAINPRO credits.

The PACE Canada kit can be obtained through the website (www.pace-canada.org) for a fee of \$135. Subscribers receive free access to the on-line learning modules and additional electronic resources. For more information, visit the PACE Canada website or contact the Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute at Suite 201, 185 Somerset St W, Ottawa, ON K2P 0J2; (613) 233-5528, extension 27. ♦

Dr Russell is a member of the CFPC's Physical Activity and Health Strategy Coordinating Committee.