

American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2018 Article of the Year



Matthew L. Boulton, MD, MPH, Editor-in-Chief

The *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* pleased to announce the selection of the 2018 Article of the Year, “Walking in Relation to Mortality in a Large Prospective Cohort of Older U.S. Adults” by Dr. Alpa V. Patel and colleagues at the American Cancer Society. The Article of the Year is selected by a committee comprising AJPM editors and governing board representatives from the journal’s two sponsoring professional societies, the American College of Preventive Medicine and the Association for Prevention Teaching and Research. The AJPM Article of the Year designation is given in recognition of outstanding research that advances the fields of preventive medicine and population health and includes a \$1,500 award. Only articles published in 2018 were considered, leaving insufficient time for citation by researchers, so selection criteria are primarily based on an appraisal of metrics related to online engagement (e.g., mainstream media mentions, article downloads on the journal website, references on social media platforms) in addition to the paper’s scientific rigor and potential contribution to the field.

The 2018 Article of the Year, “Walking in Relation to Mortality in a Large Prospective Cohort of Older U.S. Adults,” investigates the relationship between walking, the most common form of exercise among older adults, and total mortality in the elderly. Although physical activity throughout the lifecourse is key to maintaining health and prolonging life, roughly half of U.S. adults do not meet physical activity guidelines calling for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity or 75 minutes of vigorous-intensity physical activity per week, and among older adults, even fewer meet the recommendations. Examining data from a prospective cohort study of almost 140,000 older men (mean age 70.7 years) and women (mean age 68.9 years), Dr. Patel and colleagues found that any walking—even at levels below the minimum recommendations—is associated with lower all-cause mortality in older adults compared with those who were inactive. Moreover, walking at or above recommended physical activity levels appears to



Figure 1. Members of the research team, left to right: Ying Wang, PhD, Susan M. Gapstur, PhD, Alpa V. Patel, PhD, Peter T. Campbell, PhD, and Corinne R. Leach, PhD. Not pictured: Janet S. Hildebrand, MPH, Colleen Doyle, MS, and Kerem Shuval, PhD.

decrease risk even further. As a form of exercise that is free of cost, simple to undertake, and does not require special training or facilities, walking can be beneficial at any level, and conveying this message has important public health implications, especially as the U.S. population ages.

The Article of the Year appeared in AJPM’s January 2018 issue, and the study’s findings received coverage on CBS Evening News and in the *Washington Post*, *Business Insider*, *Outside*, and other major media outlets. It was also AJPM’s most mentioned article on social media for 2018 and received heavy traffic on the AJPM website.

From the Editor-in-Chief, *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan

Address correspondence to: Matthew L. Boulton, MD, MPH, School of Public Health, University of Michigan, 1415 Washington Heights, 5208 SPH II, Ann Arbor MI 48109-2029. E-mail: mboulton@umich.edu.

0749-3797/\$36.00

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2019.05.001>

The lead author, Dr. Alpa V. Patel, is Senior Scientific Director of the Behavioral and Epidemiology Research Group at the American Cancer Society. She holds a PhD in epidemiology from the Keck School

of Medicine at the University of Southern California. Her research primarily focuses on physical activity, sedentary behavior, and obesity in relation to cancer and longevity.