

**Effects of an Incentive-Based Online Physical Activity Intervention on Health Care Costs.**

Lu, C. A.B. Schultz, S. Sill, R. Petersen, J.M. Young, D.W. Edington  
*Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.* 50(11):1209-1215, 2008.

**OBJECTIVE:** To test whether participation in an incentive-based online physical activity program for employees was associated with a moderation in health care costs. **METHODS:** Health care claims trends from 2003 to 2005 were analyzed among a matched sample of participants and nonparticipants. Medical and pharmacy costs, hospital inpatient costs, and emergency room costs were examined. **RESULTS:** The average annual health care costs for participants increased by \$291 per year compared with an increase of \$360 for nonparticipants ( $P = 0.09$ ). Higher levels of participation were associated with smaller increases in health care costs. Participants had a significantly smaller increase in inpatient hospital costs (+\$20 vs +\$119), heart disease costs (\$-8 vs \$46), and diabetic costs (+\$1 vs +\$16) compared with nonparticipants. **CONCLUSIONS:** Participation in an online employee physical activity intervention was associated with smaller increases in health care costs compared to nonparticipants.