



Physical activity profile of France

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Key words

Monitoring, Policy, Surveillance, Physical Activity, Sedentariness

Purpose

To describe the physical activity profile of France, a GoPA! member.

Methods

Using a standardized methodology, GoPA! collected sociodemographic, surveillance, policy, and research data for each country around the world. A country representative reviewed and approved the data presented as a country card. Other data were extracted from Eurostat data (2015), completed and presented on the EU Physical Activity Guidelines (France fact sheet with 23 indicators for promoting health-enhancing physical activity across sectors, 2016).

Results

France is a western European country with nearly 67 million inhabitants in 2016. Life expectancy reaches 79 years for men and 85 years for women. According to GoPA! 87% of all deaths are related to non-communicable diseases (slightly less based on the 2013 French mortality data, with 17% of deaths related to accidental, infectious or parasitic causes). Like in other developed countries, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviors are widespread. Yet regular physical activity reduces the risk of developing some non-communicable diseases like cardiovascular diseases, type 2 diabetes, breast and colon cancers. Thus, based on the findings of GoPA!, 8.7% of all deaths in France are related to physical inactivity.

Different French surveys enable us to know the French population's physical activity level. For instance, in the second French National Individual Survey on Food Consumption (INCA 2, 2006-2007), 45% of the adults (49% of male and 41.4% of female) declared to meet the WHO recommended physical activity levels. Results of the third National Individual Survey on Food Consumption (INCA 3) are expected in 2016. Therefore, in France, the studies currently available show that irrespective of the age groups, the physical activity of the population is considered insufficient in light of the WHO's recommendations.

Since 2001, the French National Program for Nutrition and Health (PNNS) aims to improve the state of the nation's health by acting on diet and physical activity. The primary objective is to make scientifically valid recommendations (for population and professionals) and provide the basis for health promotion messages. The update of the PNNS's nutritional guidelines (September 2016) will focus on promotion of the practice of physical activity of different types and identifying all the opportunities for practice at any time of the day, encouraging the reduction of sedentary behavior, with accessible recommendations for each population group: children and adolescents, adults, the elderly, women during pregnancy, etc.

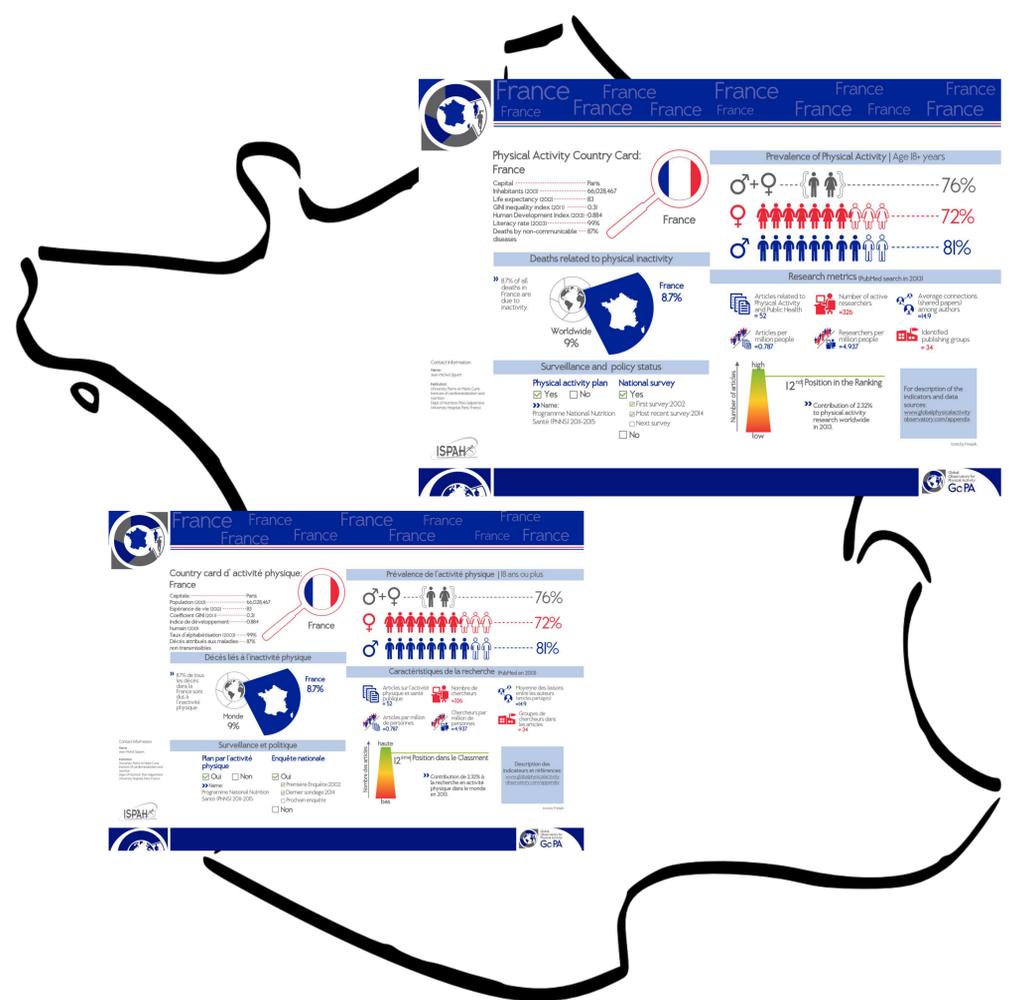
The Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sports implements various strategies (through the PNNS), aiming to increase the population's physical activity levels. Established in 2012, the National Plan for Sport, Health and Well-Being (Plan National Sport Santé Bien-Être) promotes and coordinates primary prevention and the management of chronic diseases through physical activity (led jointly by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the Ministry of Urban Affairs, Youth and Sports). Several initiatives have emerged like "sports on prescription", set up in Strasbourg in 2012, which main objective is to promote regular physical activity adapted to the health status of citizens. With its success, the program has since been expanded to other cities.

In November 2015, the French National Assembly adopted an amendment that allows general practitioners to prescribe appropriate physical activities for patients with chronic diseases.

In France, an action plan for active mobility (PAMA) was also created, which has implemented 25 measures to encourage walking and cycling and has included the establishment of a bicycle mileage allowance for commuters (for volunteer companies). This plan will be updated soon (PAMA 2). Other measures encouraging walking and cycling are included in plans dealing with environment and health issues, such as the third edition of the National Health Environmental Plan.

France adheres to the global recommendations on physical activity for children and adults' health as set out by WHO in 2010. Given the political organization in France, many decision makers are concerned with physical activity. First, the national level with the various ministries (health, sports, transport, environment, education, land planning) and then the different territorial levels: regions, provinces, cities and their affiliated groups; each of them having their specific regulatory competence.

French physical activity country card in English and French



Conclusion

The GoPA! physical activity country card implements the knowledge on the global burden of physical inactivity and sedentary behavior. Adding data but also comparing interventions between countries can help to struggle against non-communicable diseases. For example, one priority should be to encourage physical activity in schools, and this from early childhood.

The French National Observatory for Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior (**Onaps**) was officially set up on October 2015.

Just as GoPA! on a global level, one of its main missions is to **identify** and **analyze** existing data on **physical activity** and **sedentariness**, in order to establish an exact overview of France, sorted out **by population** and **by territory**.

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