

## **Built Environment, Physical Activity, and Obesity: Findings from the International Physical Activity and Environment Network (IPEN) Adult Study**

Over the past decade, there has been an increased understanding of the relationship between the built environment (walkable neighbourhood designs, access to parks, availability of public transit, and quality of pedestrian and bicycling infrastructure) and physical activity (PA). The World Health Organization emphasised the importance of fostering physical activity-supportive built environments to control the rising prevalence of non-communicable diseases.

The International Physical Activity and Environment Network (IPEN) Adult study was conducted across 12 countries on five continents to measure the associations of built environments with PA and overweight and obesity. The study included around 4,000 adults aged 18-64 years old, and used objective and self-reported data, as well as body mass index measures to reach conclusions.

Although single interventions to improve the built environment is beneficial for physical activity and weight status, each additional measure implemented is likely to have further benefits. These results are generalisable across a diverse range of countries and will also contribute to improvements in overall physical and mental health, environmental sustainability, and economic performance. A positive self-perception of neighbourhood aesthetics was also correlated with walking for leisure. Sidewalks and parks are particularly important to invest in. They serve dual functions – not only as a destination but a venue to engage in ‘leisure activity.’

Sallis, J., Cerin, E., Kerr, J., Adams, M., Sugiyama, T., Christiansen, L., Schipperijn, J., Davey, R., Salvo, D., Frank, L., De Bourdeaudhuij, I. and Owen, N., 2020. Built Environment, Physical Activity, and Obesity: Findings from the International Physical Activity and Environment Network (IPEN) Adult Study. *Annual Review of Public Health*, 41(1), pp.119-139.