



Movement and Nutrition in Health and Disease

The International Movement and Nutrition Society and the prevention of disease

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The International Movement and Nutrition Society (IMNS) was founded in Regensburg, Germany in May 2014. The society is a nonprofit association of scientists, clinicians, healthcare professionals and laypersons interested in the importance of lifestyle factors, such as physical activity and nutrition, in health and disease. The mission and major goals of the IMNS include promoting public awareness and debate, disseminating knowledge, supporting the exchange of information between scholars and the public, providing educational programs, initiating research projects and developing policies. The IMNS organised International Conferences on Movement and Nutrition in Health and Disease in June 2015, July 2016 and June 2017. Furthermore, the scientific open-access journal *Movement and Nutrition in Health and Disease* was established in March 2017 (Publisher: Regensburg University Press).

Lifestyle plays a pivotal role in the promotion of long-term health and the prevention of non-communicable diseases. Unhealthy lifestyles are risk factors for both physical and mental ill-health. Obesity, diabetes, metabolic syndrome, physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour feature increasingly among the leading causes of premature death, while lifestyle factors such as exercise and healthy eating can reduce the risk of obesity and related diseases. Movement and nutrition hold strong potential in the prevention and therapy of chronic medical conditions. Regular physical activity and better dietary choices are effective means of extending not only lifespan but also the length of time people can expect to live in good health.

The focus of medical practice has long been on the alleviation and management of disease. The continuing advancement of science has significantly enlarged the potential for effective medical care. However, there is a strong case, on grounds of both economic efficiency and increased societal wellbeing, for shifting resources from care and cure to prevention and health promotion. Identification and prophylactic management of early signs of diseases such as diabetes, chronic respiratory diseases,

cardiovascular disease, cancer, depression and dementia could reduce individual suffering and significantly reduce expenditure on health systems. Healthcare focusing primarily on the treatment of effects rather than causes of ill health may be ultimately unaffordable. The prevention and delay of the onset of significant health problems should therefore become a major focus of scientific research and clinical practice. Preventive efforts may focus on individuals with greatest risk factors for illness. However, since risks for disease constitute a continuous distribution, i.e. they are quantitative and not categorical phenomena, prevention can be community-wide and can attempt to shift the population distribution of a certain risk. The latter approach may prevent a greater burden of disease than the targeting of individuals at high risk.

In summary, the adage that prevention is better than cure is particularly salient in consideration of the toll taken on society by ill-health. Movement and nutrition may play an important role in assisting in the prevention and management of chronic diseases at the individual and population levels and in alleviating the economic and human cost of disease.

Reference

Lange KW. Movement and nutrition in health and disease. *Mov Nutr Health Dis* 2017; 1: 1–2.