

Title: Physical Activity Associated with Activities of Daily Living for West Virginians

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Background: Appalachia is a unique geographic and social region of the U.S. that faces many health disparities. Fewer than 30% of West Virginians participate in physical activity outside their workplace (WV DHHR 2013). In Appalachia, many residents lack health resources and access to physical activity areas or centers, which exacerbate physical health problems.

Research Question: This study examined whether aged 65+ West Virginians, who have had recent physical activity or exercise, will have less difficulty with activities of daily living (ADLs).

Methods: We used 6,617 responses from the 2021 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BFRSS) data to examine the association of physical exercise with difficulty completing ADLs among West Virginians. These activities include difficulty walking or using stairs and difficulty bathing or dressing.

Results: These two ADLs were examined for aged 65+ West Virginians who had recent physical activity. For difficulty using stairs: $\chi^2 (N = 2,520 \text{ DF} = 1) = 164.34, p < 0.0001$. For difficulty bathing or dressing $\chi^2 (N = 2,520 \text{ DF} = 1) = 47.6, p < 0.0001$. Those who had recent physical activity were less likely to have difficulties completing ADLs.

Conclusion/Discussion: We must identify interventions that could be useful to increase physical activity in older adults in West Virginia. However, solutions will need to be adopted for this rural region for older adults who lack access and transportation.