

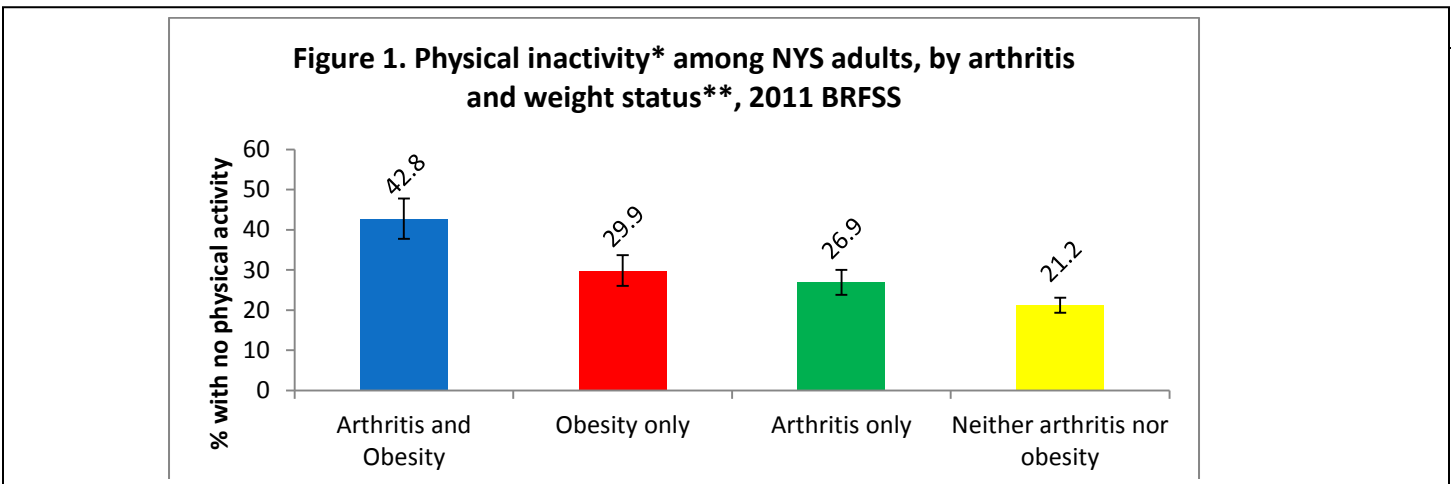
Information for Action # 2014-2

Arthritis as a potential barrier to physical activity among adults with obesity in New York State (NYS)

Despite the known benefits of physical activity for weight loss and maintenance, obese adults are less likely to obtain recommended amounts of physical activity.¹ Arthritis-related joint pain and functional limitations may contribute to low rates of physical activity among adults with obesity. Arthritis is common among obese adults in New York State (NYS) with more than one-third (34.6%) of obese adults reporting arthritis or arthritis symptoms. Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) indicate arthritis is a significant barrier to physical activity among adults with obesity.

As shown in Figure 1, rates of physical inactivity are significantly higher among obese adults with arthritis (42.8%) than among adults who are just obese (29.9%) or just have arthritis (26.9%). Adults who are obese with arthritis are more than twice as likely to be physically inactive as adults who are neither obese nor living with arthritis.

Low impact activities, such as walking, swimming and biking, are generally safe and appropriate for obese adults with arthritis and can have a role in both weight and pain reduction. Community-based group exercise programs, taught by trained instructors and proven safe and effective for adults with arthritis, are offered in many communities.¹



Data Source: 2011 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)

*Physical inactivity is defined as answering "no" to the following question: "During the past month, other than your regular job, did you participate in any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking for exercise?"

**Obesity was calculated from a self-reported height and weight and defined as a body mass index of 30.0 or higher.

Note: Error bars represent 95% confidence intervals.

PUBLIC HEALTH OPPORTUNITY

Arthritis is a barrier to physical activity in obese adults. Health care providers can address this barrier by encouraging low impact activities and referring patients with arthritis to community-based exercise programs like Active Living Every Day and the Arthritis Foundation's Walk with Ease program. Please visit <http://www.health.ny.gov/arthritis> for more information about programs available that can help individuals manage their arthritis.

Contact:

For more information about the data included and their specific implications for action, please send an email to DCDIPIFA@health.state.ny.us with IFA # 2014-2 in the subject line.

References:

1. U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Arthritis as a potential barrier to physical activity among adults with obesity – United States, 2007 and 2009. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2011; 60(19): 614-618.