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MISERICORDIA
Health Centre
The future of care

19 November 2013

COMING SOON TO YOUR OFFICE: TREADMILLS INSTEAD OF CHAIRS?

Treadmill workstations could help fight against “battle of the bulge,” reduce stress and have health impacts

At Misericordia Health Centre, a University of Manitoba researcher and her team in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management are studying how to keep office workers healthier, and her findings may lead to changes in your work environment, at a reasonable cost to employers.

“Over the last decades, a shift towards the service industry has meant that jobs requiring physical activity in the workplace have reduced from 50 per cent to 20 per cent,” says Danielle Bouchard. “Today, it’s been proven that it is important to reduce sitting time at work, even if you exercise regularly.”

One suggestion that has received some attention by businesses looking to improve the health of their employees is to provide treadmill workstations in place of chairs. However, the cost and the needed space of installing treadmills for every employee are prohibitive, especially in larger companies and businesses.

Bouchard and her team have suggested a compromise: an office environment where only a handful of treadmills are shared among a larger number of employees. To test her idea, Misericordia Health Centre purchased four treadmills for use in its Provincial Health Contact Centre (PHCC). For this study, 22 office workers have been taking turns using the treadmills while working between two and four hours per shift. Bouchard has been monitoring the workers’ usage patterns, blood pressure, heart rate, diet, sleep patterns, job satisfaction and productivity.

“I expect that sharing treadmill workstations will help reduce sedentary

behaviour in the workplace, increase employees' health and job satisfaction and maintain or increase productivity," she explains.

"At Misericordia Health Centre, staff wellness is a priority," says Rosie Jacuzzi, MHC president and CEO. "We're always exploring new ways to keep our employees healthy, that's why we're so excited to participate in Dr. Bouchard's study.

She adds: "Just think, if you're calling in to Health Links-Info Santé, a nurse walking on a treadmill may be answering your call."

Media are invited to view the treadmill workstations in use and speak with Bouchard and Lorraine McPail, an intake operator participating in the study.

Date: Tuesday, November 19, 2013

Time: 11:00 am to noon

Where: Provincial Health Contact Centre, Misericordia Health Centre, 99 Cornish Avenue

Note: the PHCC is on a locked floor. Media must phone 204-788-8362 for access upon arrival.

For more information, please contact:

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