

## Press Release

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### Naturally thin people also need to exercise

- LDL-cholesterol levels found to be almost identical in lean non-exercisers and obese non-exercisers
- Naturally thin people do not enjoy protection from heart disease
- Regular aerobic exercise is required to keep LDL-cholesterol in check

UXBRIDGE 6<sup>th</sup> March 2006 - You may be one of the lucky few that didn't need to make a New Year's resolution to join a gym. However, a recent study has found that 'naturally thin' people really do need to exercise in order to stay healthy. Dr. Gary O'Donovan, an exercise physiologist at Brunel University, found that LDL-cholesterol – the so-called 'bad cholesterol' that clogs-up the arteries – was significantly higher in lean non-exercisers than in those who take regular aerobic exercise.

The study, which was published in International Journal of Obesity, compared heart disease risk factors in 37 lean exercisers, 46 lean non-exercisers and 28 obese non-exercisers. Lean exercisers were fit and demonstrated near-optimal levels of LDL-cholesterol. In contrast, lean non-exercisers were unfit and demonstrated borderline-high levels of cholesterol at only 40-years-of-age. What's more, LDL-cholesterol levels were almost identical in lean non-exercisers and in obese non-exercisers.

Dr. O'Donovan says: "Many people, especially slim people, believe that the only benefit that can be achieved from exercising is weight loss. This is not the case. Our study suggests that slim people need to exercise as much as others in order to stay healthy and keep LDL-cholesterol in check."

Dr. O'Donovan is now seeking to measure LDL-cholesterol levels in obese exercisers, the so-called 'fat fit.' If this study found that LDL-cholesterol was similar in obese exercisers and lean exercisers, it would suggest that habitual exercise lowers heart disease risk independent of body fat.

Dr. O'Donovan says: "We have started looking for volunteers to take part in the next phase of the study. Basically, we're looking for the "Jason Leonards"



#### Note to Editors

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of the world, men who regularly exercise but have a large frame!” Those interested in volunteering for the next phase of the study should call Dr. Gary O’Donovan on 01895 266 481 or email [gary.odonovan@brunel.ac.uk](mailto:gary.odonovan@brunel.ac.uk).

(Ends)

Notes to Editors

**About LDL-Cholesterol:** When too much LDL cholesterol circulates in the blood, it can slowly build up in the inner walls of the arteries that feed the heart and brain. Combined with other substances it can form plaque, a thick, hard deposit that can clog those arteries. If a clot forms and blocks a narrowed artery, it can cause a heart attack or stroke.

LDL cholesterol of less than 2.59 mmol/l is the optimal level. Less than 3.34 mmol/l is near optimal for most people. A high LDL level (more than 4.14 mmol/l) reflects an increased risk of heart disease.

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