Physical Activity and Coronary Heart Disease

Advances in Cardiology

Vol. 18

S. Karger Basel Mnchen Paris London New York Sydney

Third Paavo Nurmi Symposium, Helsinki, September 18-20, 1975

Physical Activity and Coronary Heart Disease

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119 figures, 2 colour plates and 47 tables, 1976

S. Karger Basel Mnchen Paris London New York Sydney

Advances in Cardiology

Proceedings of previous Paavo Nurmi Symposia

X + 292 p., 113 fig., 42 tab., 1970
ISBN 3-8055-0727-5

VIII + 231 p., 95 fig., 21 tab., 1972
ISBN 3-8055-1352-6

Cataloging in Publication
Physical activity and coronary heart disease
(Advances in cardiology; v. 18)
1. Exertion 2. Coronary Disease I. Manninen, Vesa, ed. II. Halonen, Pentti I., ed.
III. Title IV. Series
W1 AD53C v.18/WG 202 P578
ISBN 3-8055-2356-4
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Foreword

The Paavo Nurmi Foundation has so far arranged three international symposia on cardiovascular disease. The subjects of the first two were Thrombosis and Coronary Heart Disease and Early Diagnosis of Coronary Heart Disease, held in 1969 and 1971. Proceedings of the respective symposia have been published as volumes 4 and 8 of Advances in Cardiology.

After the death from atherosclerosis of PAAVO NURMI, once a symbol of physical fitness, in 1973 at the age of 76 years, selection of Physical Activity and Coronary Heart Disease as the topic for the third symposium was a natural decision. The need for deeper scientific insight into the effects of physical activity on the occurrence of coronary heart disease is increasingly urgent since decreased physical activity in modern society has been associated on a vague scientific basis with the increased occurrence of coronary heart disease. The validity or otherwise of this association should be proved scientifically. Our thanks are due to all the participants of the symposium for the high quality of their contributions to a lively and friendly meeting.

The President of the Republic, URHO KEKKONEN, a friend of PAAVO NURMI from his youth and his contemporary as a keen sportsman (being the Finnish highjump champion) addressed the symposium as follows: "As an
old competition athlete and a person still actively practising physical exercise, I know by experience what an excellent means of relaxation physical activity is. Jogging and skiing, which I engage in, offer me an excellent opportunity of ridding myself of everyday stress. They lead me to healthy fatigue and, with it, a sense of deep satisfaction. This, again, gives me both the mental and physical strength to face the work of everyday life.

'It is in this positive light that I view the valuable work carried on by medical experts into physical activity as a means of preventing and curing disease. I have often recalled the medical advice adopted by the ancient Greeks: medical skill lies in the art of guessing. The significance of psychical values was expressed even better by PINDAR, the poet who wrote festal poems in honour of the Olympic winners and to whom is attributed the moral maxim that a happy state of mind is the best doctor.

'It is important that symposia are organized where international experts may concentrate on one clear problem, as you have done here now. Geographically, Finland is remote from many of the centres of medical research; we have, therefore, reason to be pleased to see among us, at the present occasion, so many experts of eminent international standing.

'PAAVO NURMI in his time made his native country well known throughout the world with his almost superhuman athletic achievements. It was with similar ardour that he concentrated on his other career in life, that of a building contractor. This endurance also enabled him to establish a foundation bearing his name. Having followed PAAVO NURMI'S success from his years of active sportmanship, I am pleased to see that this foundation is making the world cognizant of his name in a new way.'

The attendance of President KEKKONEN was a great honour for the participants and for the topic of the symposium. On behalf of the organizers and participants, we wish to express our cordial gratitude. We also once again extend our thanks to the publisher, S. Karger, Basie, for their pleasant cooperation.

PENTTI I. HALONEN
VESAMANNINEN