



FROM KNOWLEDGE TO ACTION APPLICATION

Title: Investigating the Effect of Social Support on Health-Promoting Behaviours among European Citizens

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Category: From Science to Society

Problem (max. 50 words):

Investigating the Effect of Social Support on Health-Promoting Behaviors among European Citizens

Unmet Need (max. 50 words):

While social support is known to influence health outcomes, its specific impact on preventive health behaviors across Europe is understudied. There is limited EU-wide evidence on how emotional or practical support affects the adoption of healthy lifestyles.

Project Description (max. 200 words):

This project explores the relationship between social support and engagement in health-promoting behaviors among European citizens. Using microdata from the European Health Interview Survey (EHIS), the study analyzes how perceived social support—such as emotional encouragement, practical help, and connectedness—relates to physical activity, nutrition, smoking, alcohol consumption, and sleep quality. The research aims to determine whether individuals with higher levels of social support are more likely to engage in healthy behaviors and enjoy better health outcomes, including longer healthy life expectancy. Demographic variables such as age, gender, education, and income will be controlled to isolate the effect of support networks. The project emphasizes how informal social environments (family, friends, peer groups) complement formal healthcare in promoting well-being. Findings will inform public health programs and policies that integrate social support elements into behavior change strategies—such as peer-led initiatives, group therapy, or family-inclusive interventions. Ultimately, the study highlights the often-overlooked social dimension of preventive health and contributes to a holistic approach to chronic disease prevention across Europe.

Hypothesis (25 words):

Social support has a positive effect on health-promoting behaviors and healthy life expectancy.

Implication for Practice (50 words):

This study can guide the development of health programs that involve peer networks, community groups, or family-based interventions. By leveraging social relationships, such initiatives can increase participation in physical activity, improve dietary habits, and reduce risky behavior more effectively than isolated individual-focused approaches.

Implication for Research (50 words):

The findings encourage interdisciplinary research linking public health, sociology, and psychology. Future studies could explore causal mechanisms and test interventions that strengthen social support structures to improve public health and reduce the burden of chronic disease across diverse European populations.