

# **Changes in self-reported experienced health and psychosomatic symptoms in voluntary participants in a 1-year extensive newspaper exercise campaign**

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## **Abstract**

Starting in 1977 the newspaper Ostgötacorrespondenten carried through a 1-year health information campaign in Linköping. The campaign included exercise, dietary and anti-smoking components. It was given a great deal of space in the paper with special supplements almost every week. The purpose of the study is to throw light upon self-reported changed general well-being and experienced psychosomatic symptoms and health of the participants in this campaign. 2,887 persons registered voluntarily for the campaign. After the campaign a questionnaire was sent to the 1,568 participants who had been the most active in the campaign. 935 persons (60%) answered the questionnaire. One fourth of the participants with headache, back pain, stomach problems or sleeping trouble before the campaign experienced that their symptoms had decreased during the campaign, primarily due to changed exercise habits. Half of the participants reported that their general well-being was better and 42% experienced themselves healthier as a result of changed health habits in connection with the campaign. In the group that felt healthier, almost twice as many, 62% compared with 34%, had increased their exercising compared with those who experienced themselves as neither healthier nor less healthy.