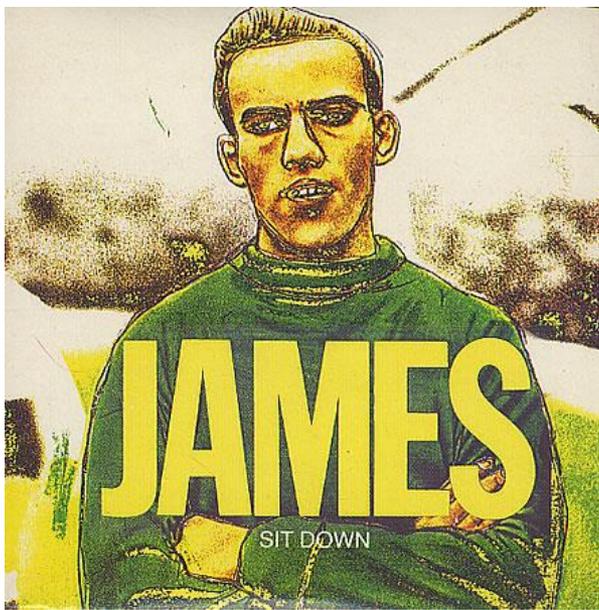


*“Oh sit down”*

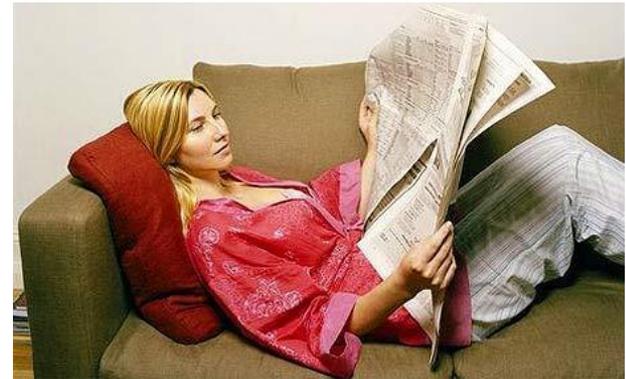
**A qualitative exploration of factors  
that promote sedentary behaviour  
and physical activity at work**

Dr Mark Tully





*Oh sit down  
Sit down next to me  
Sit down, down, down, down,  
down  
In sympathy*



## Sitting down for too long is a 'silent killer', medics warn

A report published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine recommends that workers find ways to stand for an extra four hours every day

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Workers can burn up to 144 calories per day by standing for three hours. Photo: Getty

“Office workers should be on their feet for at least two hours daily during working hours”

“This daily quota should eventually be increased to four hours a day, breaking up prolonged periods of sitting with the use of standing desks and regular walks around the office”



# Aim

Explore desk-based office workers' perceptions of factors that limited or encouraged sedentary behaviour and physical activity at work



# Participants

Location:

Software engineering company

Participants:

5 employees & 2 managers



# Methods

## Semi structured interviews

Topics:

- participants' current activity levels
- perceived barriers and facilitators to sedentary behaviour

## Measurement

- 1 week of recording of physical activity and sedentary behaviour

## Prompt

- Mobile phone app to record behaviours and prompt reflection



# Results

## Sedentary Behaviour / Physical Activity

400 mins of sedentary behaviour but only 36 minutes of physical activity per day

19% reduction in the time spent in sedentary behaviour after two weeks of using the mobile phone app to self-track behaviour



# Barriers to Reducing Sedentary Behaviour and Increasing Physical Activity

## Context of the Workplace

### Influence of Task

“In the software environment, you need to sit down, because you need to concentrate.”

### Social Pressure to Conform

We just need people who work all hours to get stuff done ... I'm a great believer that they should stay at their desk and do it.



# Barriers (2)

## Preference / Habit

### **Compartmentalised Routine**

“Its 8 ½ work day, with an hour lunch, but I usually only ever really take a half an hour, so I can leave a wee bit early to get to the gym and do my fitness after work”

### **Preferred alternatives**

People entertain themselves when they have a break by continuing to work at a computer



# Barriers (3)

## Environmental Support

### **Something else to do**

It's a pity that we don't have a canteen ... a lot of office workers will sit at their desk and eat their lunch

### **Somewhere else to work**

I do think they need to have more social areas, away, completely away, in another room from the work space ... because you get pulled back (to work jobs)



# Incentives for Reducing Sedentary Behaviour and Increasing Physical Activity

## Purpose to Leave Desk

If need to get up and do something I will, speak to colleagues or even go to the printers, to get stationery, things like that.



# Incentives (2)

## Relief of Symptoms

(Getting up more) would make me feel more refreshed



# Incentives (3)

## Social Interaction

Sometimes we come here and have whiteboard sessions and everyone has a chance to stand up and write something on the board, discussion, it's better than sitting.



# Conclusions

In developing advice to reduce sedentary behaviour

- Address perceived cultural context
- Introduce changes to the physical environment



# Thanks for Listening

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