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MEDIA STATEMENT

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ONE STEP AT A TIME TO WELLBEING

One of the most promising strategies for drug-free treatment of depression is physical activity, according to research at the Western Australian Centre for Health and Ageing (WACHA).

WACHA researchers are testing the impact of physical activity on the wellbeing of people with depression. This study follows previous research that indicated physical activity may reduce the risk of depression in adults. Depression is the leading cause of 'years of life lost' due to disability in Australia and affects 5 to 15 per cent of adults over the age of 65.

WACHA's Research Director and Professor of Geriatric Psychiatry at The University of Western Australia, Professor Osvaldo Almeida, said the evidence was mounting that regular exercise was good for keeping depressive symptoms at bay, even in older age.

"While some progress has been made in drug development research, there is an urgent need to advance research on non-pharmacological treatment for depression and one of the most promising strategies is physical activity," he said.

"This study provides a great opportunity for those suffering with depression to be part of a potentially ground-breaking research project."

The new Healthway WA funded study, *Promoting physical activity to improve the outcome of depression in later life* (also known as ACTIVEDEP), will involve people with depression who are 50 years or older and have a general practitioner.

The project will deliver a home-based program of physical activity delivered by qualified exercise physiologists over 12 weeks.

People living at home, with depression, who are over 50 years old are needed to participate in this study, funded by Healthway WA.

For more information contact the WA Centre for Health and Ageing on 9224 2855 and mention the ACTIVEDEP study or visit www.wacha.org.au

Interview opportunities with Professor Osvaldo Almeida, chief investigator and WACHA Research Director

MEDIA REFERENCE

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