

## **Bicycle Commuters Have a Lower Risk of Being Stressed**

*A new ISGlobal study underlines the role of the bicycle in improving public health and well-being in cities*

Barcelona, July 27, 2017 – People who **cycle to go to work or school** have a **lower risk of being stressed** compared to those who use other modes of transport, according to a new study by the [Barcelona Institute for Global Health \(ISGlobal\)](#), an institution supported by the "la Caixa" Foundation.

The [study](#), published in *BMJ Open*, shows that bicycle commuters who cycle **at least once a week** have a **20% lower risk of being stressed** compared to those that never cycle. In fact, those who cycle **four days per week** reduce their stress risk by **52%**.

In general, people tend to use the bicycle more when **the commute distance is shorter** and when they have **public bicycle stations** near home and work. The study results also indicate that the risk of being stressed is lower when the **urban environment is bicycle-friendly**, for example bicycle lanes or public bicycle stations. Thus, the authors conclude that an **urban planning** that takes the bicycle into account can enhance the use of this mode of transport and thereby reduce the risk of being stressed.

The study is part of the [TAPAS project](#) and was performed with almost **800 healthy adults** (18 to 69 years of age) working or studying in **Barcelona** that responded to a comprehensive telephone survey.

"This is the **first study** that focuses on the relationship between bicycle commuting and perceived stress", explains **Ione Avila-Palencia**, researcher at ISGlobal and lead author of the study. "We are a fairly stressed society and the conclusions of this study indicate **that the bicycle may help reduce stress levels** among the population", she adds.

**Mark J. Nieuwenhuijsen**, director of ISGlobal's [Initiative of Urban Planning, Environment and Health](#), points out that "these results indicate that, in order to reduce stress and **improve public health and well-being**, **political authorities should promote the use of bicycles** and make it a priority when it comes to urban and transport planning".

### **Reference**

Avila-Palencia I, de Nazelle A, Cole-Hunter T, Donaire-Gonzalez D, Jerrett M, Rodriguez DA, Nieuwenhuijsen MJ. [The relationship between bicycle commuting and perceived stress: a cross-sectional study](#). *BMJ Open*. 2017 Jun 23;7(6):e013542.

### **About ISGlobal**

The Barcelona Institute for Global Health, ISGlobal, is the fruit of an innovative alliance between academic, government, and the "la Caixa" Foundation to contribute to the efforts undertaken by the international community to address the challenges in global health. ISGlobal is a consolidated hub of excellence in research that has grown out of work first started in the world of health care by the Hospital Clínic and the Parc de Salut MAR and in the academic

sphere by the University of Barcelona and Pompeu Fabra University. The pivotal mechanism of its work model is the transfer of knowledge generated by scientific research to practice, a task undertaken by the institute's Education and Policy and Global Development departments. ISGlobal a member of the CERCA programme of the Generalitat de Catalunya.

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