

# Jumping at the opportunity: Promoting physical activity after COVID-19

We thank Morrison and colleagues for their interest in our article<sup>1</sup> and their insightful contribution on the exemplary strategies of the Republic of Slovenia to address the expected adverse health outcomes of prolonged physical and social isolation as a consequence of the COVID-19 crisis.

One notable glimmer of hope of the COVID-19-related deceleration of everyday social flurry was the apparent remarkable benefit on natural environments due to reduced pollution and traffic. As has been pointed out, this benefit may be very short-lived, if the society does not learn and take appropriate action.<sup>2</sup> We argue that the COVID-19 pandemic and the perceived presently strong public realization of the value of physical activity represent a comparable opportunity for the implementation of long-term public health measures. The devastating health consequences of inactivity in general and from the perspective of COVID-19-related confinement policies have recently been excellently reviewed by Narici and colleagues.<sup>3</sup> It would be a shame to not use the current public awareness of the health benefits of physical activity kindled by the COVID-19 crisis to implement new health-promoting policies.<sup>4</sup> This could include an amplification of the provision of infrastructures for outdoor activities, such as cycle paths, parks, and sports facilities, in particular, in urban areas.




We fully agree with Morrison and colleagues that internationally harmonized approaches to balance epidemic containment strategies with the encouragement of physical activity are desirable. We also concur that detailed assessment of long-term health effects of confinement in combination with potentially reduced physical activity will be of high importance for governmental management of possible future situations requiring isolation strategies.

With respect to the term “social distancing,” we agree with the numerously suggested terminological amendment to “physical isolation,” despite the common utilization of the former. The connotation of avoidance of social contacts—beside all its other psychological implications—may cause misunderstandings also with regard to exercise activities

in social settings, when physical distance is maintained, as commonly practiced at this time (eg, group circuit trainings and yoga in parks with sufficient distance between all participants). The terminology should clearly indicate that there is no need for social but only for physical distancing to prevent viral spreading.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

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