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HEALTHY HABITS FOR KIDS:

A New Study Published in the *Journal of Community & Family Health* Shows Video Program Encourages Children to be More Active

Results Indicate Knowledge and Attitudes Improved

Phase II of Study Will Look at Long-Term Effects

(September 18, 2002) Silver Spring, MD-- A new study to be published in the fall issue of the *Journal of Community and Family Health* has some noteworthy results about the effectiveness of a video entertainment package on increasing children's understanding of the cardiovascular system, as well as on developing pro-health attitudes and behaviors to make healthy lifestyle choices. Researchers found that the pilot program "*Dynamotion: Kids Gotta Move*" was able to:

- Motivate children to engage in physical activity;
- Increase their knowledge about the way their bodies work; and
- Change their attitudes about healthy behaviors.

The study was funded by a grant from the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) of the National Institutes of Health. It was designed to assess the potential influences of a video-based intervention on children's knowledge, self-esteem, and ideas about healthy eating and physical activity. The program included a 15-minute video episode about the heart, lungs, and blood, and a teaching guide, which comprise a 40-minute to 50-minute curriculum.

The study was conducted by Take Aim Media, a Maryland-based educational media production company. "With the positive results we received, we think well-designed and engaging media can help lead the fight against childhood obesity and poor nutrition," said Amy DeLouise, the study's Principal Investigator and President of Take Aim Media, Inc.

"We knew it was possible to *entertain* children with a television show, but our question was larger than that," said Anice Hoachlander, co-creator of *Dynamotion*®. "We wanted to know if we could actually empower kids to start taking care of their own bodies at a young age." The study is a unique opportunity to investigate whether television can be more than a passive form of entertainment, and instead be used as a medium to increase children's knowledge of how their bodies work and to encourage them to keep moving.

Study Results

Compared to the control group, students exposed to the video used in the pilot program:

- Increased their knowledge scores significantly about physical activity and cardiovascular health
- Improved self-efficacy—i.e. their personal judgment of their *own* ability to make their heart stronger and body healthier
- Showed an active interest in participating in the exercises and movements while watching the video

Dr. Thomas L. McKenzie, a Professor in the Department of Exercise and Nutritional Sciences at San Diego State University, was on the research team for the video study. "This is an important step in the study of the impact television can have on children's health," McKenzie said. "The more we learn about how to motivate kids to get up and move, the more we can incorporate the information into strategies and activities that may have a lifelong impact on health."

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has declared childhood obesity an epidemic in the United States, much of it linked to inactivity. Statistics from a number of previous studies and publications support this claim:

- The average American child between the ages of 8 and 18 spends more than three hours daily watching television, and another three or four hours with other media.¹
- The percentage of children and adolescents who are defined as overweight has more than doubled since the early 1970's.²
- The hospital costs linked to childhood obesity have tripled since 1981, soaring to \$127 million per year.³

Purpose and Methodology of the Video Study

The purpose of the NHLBI study was to measure the effects of an exposure of a video, *Dynamotion®: Kids Gotta Move*, on knowledge, self-efficacy, and attitude about physical activity and cardiovascular health among students in grades K-2. The methodology included testing 208 K-2 students. Twelve classrooms (4 each of K-2) were randomly assigned to intervention or control groups. All participants completed an assessment of knowledge, self-efficacy, and physical activity on two occasions, one month apart. In addition, children in the intervention group watched the video one day prior to the second administration of the assessment. Measurements were made through picture-driven questionnaires from the children, along with observations by researchers.

Dynamotion®: Kids Gotta Move is centered on an animated, energetic dog named Dynamo and his live-action friends, the Actioneers, a group of young children interested in their own health. Dynamo and his friends use movement dances and health adventures to teach elementary school age children how their bodies work and how they fit into the world around them. Each thematically based 15-minute video unit includes two or three interactive, music-driven movement segments and three fitness breaks.

Phase I of the study was 6 months long, and funded through the NHLBI Small Business Innovation Research program. Based in part on the success of Phase I, the NHLBI has awarded a two-year grant to fund Phase II of the study, which will explore whether exposure to multiple videos can have a more significant impact on children and change their behavior *after* the videos are over.

For more information about *Dynamotion®* and the status of the study, visit www.dynamotion.com. For more information on the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, visit www.nhlbi.nih.gov.

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About the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)

NHLBI is one of 27 institutes and centers of the National Institutes of Health. It provides leadership for a national program in diseases of the heart, blood vessels, lung, and blood; blood resources; and sleep disorders. NHLBI plans, conducts, fosters, and supports an integrated and coordinated program of basic research, clinical investigations and trials, observational studies, and demonstration and education projects. NHLBI-supported research is conducted in the Institute's own laboratories and by scientific institutions and individuals supported through research grants and contracts.

About Take Aim Media & Dynamotion

Take Aim Media is a multi-media production company based in Silver Spring, Maryland. Producing work in all electronic formats—video, television, film, CD-ROM, DVD, and web streaming—Take Aim is nationally recognized as a leader in the electronic media industry. Take Aim CEO Amy DeLouise teamed up with Dynamotion concept developers Tyler Whitmore and Anice Hoachlander to form Dynamotion Enterprises, LLC, which will manage the marketing and licensing of the Dynamotion video series and related products. Currently, they are in discussions with television networks about broadcast distribution of the series, and are working with a distributor to provide the video to elementary schools.

¹ McClain DL. Where is Today's Child? Probably watching TV. New York Times; December 6, 1999; Sect. C:18.

² National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES); 1999.

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; May 1, 2002.