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Health Newsfeed for Wednesday, August 1,2012

HEADLINE: BIG KILLER

ANCHOR LEAD: JUST HOW BIG A PROBLEM IS PHYSICAL INACTIVITY? ELIZABETH TRACEY REPORTS

Physical inactivity or sedentary lifestyle are medicalese for couch potato, and as many recent headlines have shown, contribute greatly to our current obesity epidemic. But just how big a problem is a lack of physical activity? Michael Klag, dean of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins, says it's ranking as a killer may surprise you.

KLAG: The estimate is that physical inactivity is the fourth leading fundamental cause of death around the world, and if you look at coronary heart disease there is about six percent of coronary heart disease directly attributable to it, seven percent of diabetes of type two diabetes. But what we often don't think about is cancer. So physical inactivity is linked to variety of cancers, ten percent of breast cancer, ten percent of colon cancer. So it points out that we really need to do a better job of attacking the issue of physical inactivity. :28

A recent issue of the Lancet was devoted to physical inactivity, and called for policy level action to combat it. At Johns Hopkins, I'm Elizabeth Tracey.