


## Outline:

- Evidence: cycling and health
- Other benefits \& risks



## The <br> Economist

## The shape of things to come



## Obesity

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\% of population* with Body Mass Index over 30, latest year available


## Active travel and overweight

Prevalence of overweight children (IOTF 2002)


Levels of cycling (DfT 1996)

## Sustrans, 2008.

## Copenhagen



- 6,954 regular cycle commuters
- total study population of 30,640
- followed up for an average of 14.5 years
- mean journey time for 3 hours per week

Source: Andersen et al. Arch Intern Med. 2000;160:1621-1628

## Relative risk of cycling to work

RR: all cause mortality


- 6,171 men and 783 women including 2,291 deaths
- RR 0.72 (95\% CI: 0.57-0.91)
- adjusted for age, sex, educ. level, BP, BMI, physical activity, cholesterol and smoking
- (data from Copenhagen Male study and Glostrup Population Studies)



## Cyclists live longer

Changes in cycling over 5 years and subsequent mortality: Copenhagen City Heart Study


## People who take up cycling live longer

## Active commuting and cardiovascular risk



## Multiple studies now show cycling reduces risk of heart disease

## Active Travel to School and Cardiovascular Fitness in Danish Children and Adolescents

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Fitness in relation to travelling mode in 919 children


Med. Sci. Sports Exerc., Vol. 38, No. 10, pp. 1724-1731, 2006.

# Physical fitness in relation to transport to school in adolescents: the Danish youth and sports study 

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## Detailed information on absolute differences in fitness measures between passive transport and the two active types of traveling

|  | Walking vs passive (95\% CI) | P value | Cycling vs passive (95\% CI) | P value |
| :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- | :--- |
| Aerobic power (ml min-1 kg-1) | $0.83(-0.46-2.11)$ | 0.206 | $2.34(1.45-3.24)$ | $<0.001$ |
| Sargent jump (m) | $-0.005(-0.021-0.011)$ | 0.538 | $0.004(-0.007-0.016)$ | 0.435 |
| Iron ball throw (m) | $0.04(-0.07-0.15)$ | 0.453 | $0.04(-0.04-0.11)$ | 0.345 |
| Situps (n) | $-0.18(-3.18-2.81)$ | 0.904 | $2.97(0.84-5.09)$ | 0.006 |
| Static back strength (sec) | $10.70(-1.53-22.94)$ | 0.086 | $17.63(9.03-26.22)$ | $<0.001$ |
| Arm flexion dynamic test (n) | $-6.47(-12.59-0.35)$ | 0.038 | $-2.13(-6.44-2.17)$ | 0.331 |
| Sit and reach (cm) | $1.91(-0.13-3.96)$ | 0.067 | $3.14(1.72-4.57)$ | $<0.001$ |
| Shuttle run (sec) | $0.15(-0.06-0.36)$ | 0.171 | $-0.01(-0.16-0.14)$ | 0.875 |

## Children who cycle to school are fitter than those who don't

## Physical Activity Levels of Children Who Walk, Cycle, or Are Driven to School

Ashley R. Cooper, PhD, Lars Bo Andersen, PhD, Niels Wedderkopp, MD, Angie S. Page, PhD,

- Cycling data for 9 and 15 yr old children the European Youth Heart Study
- Physical activity was assessed by accelerometry in about 1000 children (Am J Prev Med 2005;29(3):179-184)


Weekday activity pattern of boys by method of travel to school. *=p $<0.05$ for active travel (walk and cycle) vs car

Children who walk and cycle to school are more active overall than those who travel to school by motorized transport








## Cycling is cool and sexy

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Deaths from road traffic injuries and physical inactivity, 2003


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## WHO guidance and tool for economic assessment of cycling and walking



## Health cost / benefit of cycling

- At least 20:1 life years gained: lost (Hillman)
- One death per 33m km cycled
- Risky to be sedentary
- Cycling is safer than driving
- There is 'safety in numbers'


## Safety in numbers: Cyclist risks and distances travelled





