

Thomas L. Schmid, PhD.

Dr. Schmid is Senior Evaluation Specialist and Director of the Active Community Environments (ACES) workgroup, Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. ACES is exploring how urban design and transportation infrastructure influence levels of physical activity and health in the community. Basic research and practical intervention through policy and environmental change are the primary focus of ACES, examples include working with the University of Washington to develop empirically based walking and bicycling audit tools, the Regional Plan Association of New York to changes in physical activity associated with improved transit access and collaborating with Georgia Technical Institute to determine the effects of community design on physical activity and health. ACES research focuses on formulating hypotheses on the relationships between community form and physical activity, developing tools to test these hypotheses and designing and evaluating environmental interventions and policies that promote physical activity.

A growing focus of ACES is policy research where policy is either the dependant or independent variable. The newly established Physical Activity Policy Research Network (PAPRN) is an example of the emerging emphasis in this area.

Recent ACES related collaborative research has examined the association of Sprawl with BMI and activity (cf Ewing et al 2003) community design features such as mix, connectivity and commute patterns with BMI and amount of physical activity (cf Frank et al. 2003, 2004, 2005), amount of green space and activity (cf Zlot 2005) and costs associated with various types of physical activity (cf Wang et al 2004).

Dr. Schmid provides technical assistance in the design, implementation and evaluation of health programs to domestic and international agencies. Recent examples of international assistance include development of national and regional policy strategies for prevention of Cardiovascular Disease in Russia, improving community based maternal health care in Tanzania, and evaluating the effects on physical activity and quality of life of significant policy and infrastructure changes in Bogota Columbia.