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**PRIMARY CARE HEALTH CONSULTANTS CAN BE COST-EFFECTIVE  
AND MAY HELP REDUCE CARDIOVASCULAR RISK  
NEW RESEARCH PUBLISHED BY SAGE IN  
SCANDINAVIAN JOURNAL OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

*Los Angeles, London, New Delhi, Singapore and Washington DC (August 20, 2008)* – Offering health tests and consultations in primary care settings can be cost-effective and may help in the fight against the increased burden of lifestyle diseases, according to new research published by SAGE in the August issue of the *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*

The findings are the result of a five-year randomized trial: the Ebeltoft Health Promotion Project (EHPP), conducted by the Department of General Practice, Institute of Public Health, University of Aarhus, Denmark. Over two thousand 30-49 year olds in Denmark were invited to take part in the trial, of which 85% participated, each being assigned to a random allocation in one of three groups:

- A control group answering questionnaires
- An intervention group with questionnaires, broad health testing with written advice, followed by a normal 10-15 minute consultation on demand
- An intervention group like the second group, but with a planned 45 minute patient-centered consultation

A key finding of the five year follow up was that patients participating in health tests with consultations demonstrated lower risk of heart and cardiovascular diseases: 19% in the control group had elevated risk factors compared to 10% in the two intervention groups. The impact of testing was also found to be cost effective. The overall number of contacts to the health care system was not increased, and as such, significantly better life expectancy was achieved without extra direct and total costs. Participants also reported an overall positive perception from having health tests and consultations.

“There has been a lot of doubt within the international community that there are health outcomes of health tests and patient centered consultations within primary care,” said lead author Dr Torsten Lauritzen. “In Denmark, general practitioners are gate keepers to the entire health system. Almost all Danes are ascribed to specific general practitioners. Such findings suggest that clinicians and policy makers should now consider implementing health tests and consultations more widely.”

“Health tests and health consultations reduced cardiovascular risk without psychological strain, increased utilization or increased costs,” by Torsten Lauritzen, Morten Sig Ager Jensen, Janus Laust Thomsen, Bo Christensen and Marianne Engberg, published in the *Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*, is being provided free for a limited time at: <http://sjp.sagepub.com/cgi/reprint/36/6/650>

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Published eight times a year, ***Scandinavian Journal of Public Health*** is a forum for Nordic as well as international public health research and policy. Legislation in most countries in the Nordic region allows researchers to carry out studies linking various population registers by means of individual personal identification numbers. This provides a unique source of data which is invaluable for the public health community and *SJPH* aims to publish the excellent research that results from this. The journal is the official publication of the Associations of Public Health in Nordic Regions, comprising leading public health organizations in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. <http://sjp.sagepub.com/>

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