



Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council  
Conseil Canadien des Distributeurs de Véhicules Hors Route

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## INDUSTRY WATCH

### Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV)

By Jo-Anne Farquhar

#### **Study Confirms Recreational Off-Road Riding Good For the Body, Soul and Quality of Life**

The results are in! It's been confirmed! All-terrain vehicle (ATV) and off-road motorcycle (ORM) riding is good for your body and soul. Not only that but the second publication in a series of four reports has confirmed that 96.6% of off-highway vehicle (OHV) riders consider themselves to be both positive, optimistic thinkers and people with an ability to cope with stress "fairly often" to "almost all of the time".

In July 2007, the Canadian Off-Highway Vehicle Distributors Council (COHV) and its partners, the All-Terrain Quad Council of Canada (AQCC), the Motorcyclists Confederation of Canada (MCC) and the Government of Nova Scotia commissioned, through York University, a ground breaking, first ever, comprehensive probe of the fitness and health benefits of ATV and ORM recreational riding.

Jamie F. Burr, Veronica K. Jamnik, Jim A. Shaw and Professor Norman Gledhill at York University's Physical Activity and Chronic Disease Unit, Faculty of Health conducted the three-year study. The purpose of the research -- to characterize the physiological demands of recreational OHV riding under typical riding conditions using habitual recreational riders.

The York University team concluded in its first report that off-road vehicle riding was found to require physical exertion and can be associated with moderate-intensity cardiovascular demand and fatigue-inducing muscular strength challenges, similar to other self-paced recreational sports such as golf, rock-climbing and alpine skiing.

They further concluded that ATV and off-road motorcycle riding conforms to the recommended physical activity guidelines of both Health Canada and the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM), July 2010, and can be beneficial in achieving changes in health and fitness.

The second report entitled "Health-related Quality of Life of Habitual Recreational Off-Road Vehicle Riders" (Health & Fitness Journal of Canada, June 2010) explored quality of life issues of off-road riders and compare the levels of mental and physical functioning quality of life (QOL) of recreational off-road vehicle riders to Canadian population norms.

In order to characterize the health, fitness and quality of life, of people who ride recreational off-road vehicles a survey was completed by 310 off-road riders from across Canada. A second group of 141 riders from Ontario and Quebec completed the SF-36 questionnaire (Canadian Physical Activity Fitness and Lifestyle Assessment) to further characterize the self-perceived health of riders and to identify habitual (regular user) ride characteristics and physically demanding tasks/experiences associated with riding motorcycle and ATV.

In summarizing the results of the survey and the SF-36, it was determined that overall, habitual off-road riders had higher levels of physical functioning than Canadian population norms and that it was possible that the higher levels of vitality, general happiness and quality of life of recreational off-road vehicle riders is a consequence of participation in the sport.

Research has consistently shown that physical activity is related to a postponement of disability and increases independent living in older adults. Non-traditional forms of physical activity such as recreational ATV and ORM riding are becoming increasingly more popular among segments of the population for whom traditional forms of physical activity (ie: jogging, swimming, resistance training) are impractical, unavailable or unappealing.

With health and exercise being top of mind for most families and for the health care system in Canada, this study proves that being out on the trails on your ATV or ORM is not only fun but contributes to individual and family emotional well-being and physical fitness.

The COHV and its member companies: Arctic Cat, BRP (*Can-Am*), Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, Polaris, Suzuki and Yamaha are committed to family recreation and healthy, active life styles. We believe that the results of this study are a great resource to be shared with those who question OHVs as a healthy recreational activity.

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