

# Curriculum Vitae

## Sara J. Kovacs, PhD

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Temple University  
Department of Kinesiology  
Exercise and Sport Science Track  
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### Education

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University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA  
**Doctor of Philosophy, Department of Health and Physical Activity**  
August 2017, **Exercise Physiology**  
Advisor: Dr. John M. Jakicic, Ph.D.  
Dissertation Topic: Factors Associated with Physical Activity in Patients Undergoing Bariatric Surgery

University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA  
**Master of Science, Department of Health and Physical Activity**  
August 2014, **Health, Physical Activity, and Chronic Disease** (Research Track)  
Advisor: Dr. Bethany Barone-Gibbs, Ph.D.

Slippery Rock University of Pennsylvania, Slippery Rock, PA  
**Bachelor of Science, College of Health, Environment and Science**  
May 2013, **Exercise Science**

### Professional Work Experience

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**2017 Non-Tenure Track Faculty, Assistant Professor**, Department of Kinesiology  
Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

**2013- 2017 Graduate Student Assistant**, University of Pittsburgh Physical Activity and Weight  
Management Research Center, Department of Health and Physical Activity  
University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

### Academic Teaching Experience

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Temple University, Philadelphia, PA

#### **Kinesiology Department Exercise and Sport Science Track Academic Classes:**

Instructor for *Exercise, Nutrition and Behavior*, Current  
Instructor for *Advanced Physiology of Exercise*, Current  
Instructor for *Exercise Science Writing in Social Media*, Current

## University of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh, PA

### Department of Health and Physical Activity Academic Classes:

Instructor for *Physical Activity and Weight Management*, Fall and Spring 2015-Spring 2017

Co-Instructor for *Group Fitness Instructor*, Spring 2016, 2017

Co-Instructor for *Aerobics Instructor*, Spring 2016

Teaching and Module Assistant for *Lifetime Activities 1&2*, Fall 2015, 2016

Teaching Assistant for Dr. John Jakicic, *Advanced Laboratory Techniques*, Fall 2016

Teaching Assistant for Dr. Elizabeth Nagle, *Advanced Exercise Physiology Laboratory*, Fall 2014, 2016

Teaching Assistant for Dr. Frederic Goss, *Applied Anatomy Laboratory*, Fall 2014

### Department of Health and Physical Activity 'Physical Education (PEDC)' Classes:

Instructor for *Bootcamp Fitness (PEDC 0197)*, Fall and Spring 2014-2015

Instructor for *Personal Fitness (PEDC 0193)*, Fall and Spring 2014-2015

Instructor for *Cycling Exercise (PEDC 0222)*, Fall, Spring and Summer 2013-2014

Instructor for *Aerobic Mix (PEDC 0236)*, Fall and Spring 2013-2014

Instructor for *On the Ball (PEDC 0209)*, Fall and Spring 2013-2014

## Dissertation

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**Kovacs, SJ, Rogers RJ, Davis, KK, Courcoulas AP, Jakicic JM. Factors Associated with Physical Activity in Patients Undergoing Bariatric Surgery.** Doctoral Dissertation, University of Pittsburgh

Principal Investigator: Sara J. Kovacs

Role: recruitment, data collection, data entry, data analysis

Dates: January 2017 - present

Study Aim: To examine psychosocial factors associated with physical activity and sedentary behavior in patients undergoing bariatric surgery.

Funding: Funding provided by the Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center

Abstract: Physical activity is an important lifestyle target for post-bariatric surgery patients that may be associated with improved weight loss, lower incidence of weight regain, and improvements in selective health-related outcomes. Despite these benefits, engagement in physical activity is less than optimal in post-bariatric surgery patients. Identifying psychosocial variables associated with physical activity may lead to the development of interventions that better address the challenges to participating in physical activity experienced after bariatric surgery, and enhance physical activity in these patients. **PURPOSE:** To examine associations between selective psychosocial variables and physical activity in patients who had undergone bariatric surgery within the past 2 years. **METHODS:** Eighty-three patients who had undergone bariatric surgery (age 44.0±11.8 years, BMI 44.0±11.8 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) self-reported current physical activity and select psychosocial constructs. Additionally, participants provided retrospective information on physical activity and select psychosocial constructs prior to surgery. **RESULTS:** Subjects increased leisure-time physical activity by a median 508.00 (48.00, 1138.00) kcal/week from pre- to post-bariatric surgery. Physical activity was significantly associated with a number of pre- and post-surgical psychosocial constructs in the bivariate analyses; however, only social support, fitness orientation, physical function and self-classified weight emerged as significant predictors of physical activity engagement in subsequent stepwise regression analyses. **CONCLUSIONS:** These findings may suggest that both pre- and post-bariatric surgery intervention may need to target important constructs that include the encouragement of social support, strategies to enhance the effort individuals put forward to engage in physical activity, focus on enhancing physical function, and awareness of weight status with the goal of improving engagement in physical activity.

## Professional Research Experience

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### **PREVIOUS:**

University of Pittsburgh Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center, Pittsburgh, PA

### **Be Fit Pitt- Determining the Acceptability and Effectiveness of a Workplace Initiative to Increase Physical Activity Engagement**

Principal Investigator: Renee J. Rogers, Ph.D. and Sara J. Kovacs, PhD

Dates: March 2016-present

Role: grant writing, recruitment, data collection, data entry, data analysis

Study Aim: To determine the acceptability and effectiveness of a technology-based workplace initiative to increase physical activity engagement.

Funding: School of Education Faculty and Student Research Grant Awarded to Dr. Rogers and Sara J. Kovacs

### **REACH Study- Reinforcing Exercise and Activity to Change Health**

Principal Investigator: Seth Creasy, Ph.D.

Dates: March 2016- July 2016

Role: recruitment, data collection, data entry, interventionist, exercise supervision

Study Aim: To examine changes in moderate-to-vigorous physical activity in response to a supervised physical activity program prescribed in minutes/week, an unsupervised physical activity program prescribed in minutes/week and an unsupervised physical activity program prescribed in steps/day.

Funding: Funding provided by the Physical Activity and Weight Management Research Center and a School of Education Research Grant

### **Technology after Bariatric Surgery, the 'TABS' Study**

Principal Investigator: Renee J. Rogers, Ph.D.

Dates: October 2015-present

Role: recruitment, interventionist

Study Aim: To examine the effect of applying a minimal contact technology-based intervention at 1 year post-bariatric surgery on weight change compared to standard care.

Funding: University of Pittsburgh Central Research Development Grant

## Honors & Awards

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2013-2017 Graduate Assistantship, University of Pittsburgh

2017 Deborah Aaron Memorial Award Recipient, University of Pittsburgh

2016 Fall CGSE Travel Grant Recipient, Council of Graduate Students in Education, University of Pittsburgh

2016 Richard N. & Bernadette C. Jakicic Student Recognition Award, University of Pittsburgh

2016 School of Education Faculty and Student Research Grant Recipient, University of Pittsburgh

2016 Spring CGSE Travel Grant Recipient, Council of Graduate Students in Education, University of Pittsburgh

2014 Outstanding Master's Student Award, Department of Health and Physical Activity, University of Pittsburgh

2013 Dr. James McFarland Award, Campus Recreation, Slippery Rock University

## Publications

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### Articles:

Rogers RJ, Lang W, Gibbs BB, Davis KK, Burke LE, **Kovacs SJ**, Portzer LA, Jakicic JM. Applying a technology-based system for weight loss intervention in adults with obesity. *Obesity Science and Practice*. 2016; 2(1):3-12. doi: 10.1002/osp4.18 PMID: 27812375.

### Scientific Abstracts:

**Kovacs, SJ**, Courcoulas, AP, Rogers RJ, Davis, KK, Jakicic JM, **Behavioral Correlates of Physical Activity in Post-Bariatric Surgery Patients**. Accepted by *American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery Annual Meeting* (November 2017).

Creasy, SA, Rogers, RJ, Davis, KK, Gibbs, BB, Kershaw, EE, **Kovacs, SJ**, Maher, MR, Kowalsky, RJ, O'Dell, M, Collins, KA, Raybuck, SD, Marcin, ML, Donahue, PT, Jakicic, JM. **Effects of supervised and unsupervised physical activity programs for weight loss**. (Slide Presentation) *American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting*, 2017

**Kovacs SJ**, Rogers RJ, McGuire MR, Jakicic JM, **Association between Health-Related Quality of Life and Weight Loss, Fitness, and Physical Activity: The Heart Health Study**. *American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting*, 2017.

Rogers RJ, **Kovacs SJ**, Byard TD, Collins KA, Creasy SA, Gomberg MA, McCoy SM, Peluso A, Raybuck SD, Rupp K, Jakicic JM, **Weight loss and program satisfaction in response to the Weight Watchers SmartPoints plan**. *American Society of Nutrition annual meeting at Experimental Biology*, 2016.

**Kovacs SJ**, Kalarchian MA, Marcus MD, Courcoulas AP, Levine MD, Rogers RJ, Jakicic JM. **Change in Physical Activity Prior to Bariatric Surgery does not Predict Post-Surgery Weight Loss**. *American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting*, 2016.

Jakicic JM, Rogers RJ, **Kovacs SJ**, Byard TD, Collins KA, Creasy SA, Gomberg MA, McCoy SM, Peluso A, Raybuck SD, Rupp K, Wojtanowski A, Foster GD. **A Commercial Program is Effective for Weight Loss and Improving Health-related Outcomes in Adults**. *American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting*, 2016.

Rogers RJ, Schelbert EB, Barone Gibbs B, McGuire MR, Creasy SA, **Kovacs SJ**, McCoy SM, Peluso A, Rupp K, Jakicic JM. **12 Month Behavioral Weight Loss Intervention with Varying Doses of Physical Activity: The Heart Health Study**. *American College of Sports Medicine Annual Meeting*, 2016

Wilhelm N, Kelly J, **Kovacs S**, Urda J, Winters C, Larouere B, Lynn J. **Effectiveness of an Exercise Is Medicine (EIM)™ Referral Program to Change Exercise Behaviors and Efficacy**. *American College of Sports Medicine Mid-Atlantic Regional Chapter*, 2014.

### Chapters:

Jakicic JM, Rogers RJ, Sherman SA, **Kovacs SJ**. Physical Activity and Weight Management. *Handbook of Obesity Treatment (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition)*. Eds: Thomas A. Wadden and George A. Bray. Guilford Publications, Inc.: New York. *In Press*.

## **Presentations**

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*Change in Physical Activity Prior to Bariatric Surgery does not Predict Post-Surgery Weight Loss.* Research Talk, University of Pittsburgh CGSE Research Conference, Pittsburgh, PA. March 2016.

*Starting a Physical Activity Routine.* Minimally Invasive Bariatric & General Surgery, Magee Women's Hospital of UPMC. Pittsburgh, PA. January 2016.

*Making the "Move" during your Workday.* Bethel Park School District Teacher In-service Day, Bethel Park, PA. February 2017.