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Video games may cut cancer risk: B.C. researcher

By CBC News
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Ryan Rhodes recently won a Canadian Cancer Society award worth \$100,000. He plans to spend the money on research to show more conclusively that video games motivate people to be more active.

The behavioural psychologist said exercise is a proven key to staying healthy, but keeping people motivated to exercise is a problem.

"Boredom is one of the major factors when we're looking at physical activity. Time seems to come to a standstill and it's almost like paint drying," Rhodes said.

"There's quite good research that's demonstrating that by living an active lifestyle you can decrease the risk of certain cancers (...) So, that's where researchers like myself come in and say, 'OK, well, how can we get people active?'"

Rhodes thinks video games may be able to relieve boredom. His lab research suggests computer-based exercise programs, such as Nintendo Wii, motivate participants to stick to exercise regimes.

Now he wants to test his research outside the lab, in the real world. "It's really time to put them into the homes, see if people can adhere to them over longer periods of time, when there's all kinds of distractions in the home," he said.

Rhodes will conduct his research during the next five years.

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