

## THE EFFECTS OF PACING ON THE SIX MINUTE WALK TEST

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**Background and Purpose:** The American Thoracic Society states that administrators are not allowed to guard participants while performing the six minute walk test (6MWT). This may lead to increased fall risk or adverse events during this test. The research study conducted aimed to determine whether guarding a patient during the 6MWT had a pacing effect on total distance walked.

**Subjects:** 20 participants between the ages of 18-59 and 20 participants over 60 years old completed the research study.

**Methods and Materials:** This study was a randomized controlled trial in which, participants completed the 6MWT twice; once with a researcher guarding them and once walking by themselves. The initial condition was randomized. The outcome measures utilized were the total distance walked during the 6MWT and the Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion.

**Results:** No statistically significant difference in mean distance walked was found between independent (1626.67 feet) versus patient guarded (1597.61 feet) trials of the 6MWT.

**Conclusion:** Based on the results of this study, pacing during the administration of the 6MWT did not have an effect on total distance walked or perceived exertion in populations both below and above sixty years old.

**Implications:** This research supports the recommendation to adapt the administration protocol of the 6MWT to one where administrators can guard their patients to improve the overall safety of the test.