Physical Inactivity, Obesity, and the Latino Adult Population: A Literature Review

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Within the United States, minority individuals face many health disparities that lead to lower qualities of life and an increase in the prevalence of various health conditions. The Latino population is the largest minority group in the United States. Latinos are more vulnerable to many diseases and health conditions because of low socioeconomic statuses, lack of access to healthcare, language barriers, and cultural differences. Obesity is a large public health issue in the Latino population with 44.8% of Latino males over the age of 20 being obese, and 46.8% of Latina women 20 years or older living with obesity. It is recommended that adults engage in 150 minutes of moderate-vigorous physical activities each week to increase positive health outcomes. 49.5% of the Latino American adult population over the age of 18 did not meet the federal activity guidelines in 2018. 31.7% of Virginian Latino adults report that they do not engage in physical activities.

The following databases were reviewed to find eligible physical activity articles to review: CINAHL Plus, PubMed, and APA PsycINFO. The search terms "Hispanic/Latino adult," "physical inactivity," and "obesity" were used in each database to find potential articles to review. A total of 200 articles from the three databases were returned. To be included in this literature review a journal article must have been based in the United States, focused on the Latino/Hispanic population, and study a level of the social ecological model. A total of 9 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in this literature review.

Purpose

- The social ecological model can be applied to the issue of physical inactivity in the Latino population to get a better understanding of the various factors that affect this health behavior.
- The individual, interpersonal, and community level each offer different factors that impact the health behaviors within the population.
- The relationship between physical inactivity and obesity within the Latino American population can be analyzed by using the social ecological model which can lead to the development of physical activity interventions and programs that increase health outcomes for this vulnerable population.

Discussion

- The reviewed articles showed that the individual, interpersonal, and community level offer various barriers and facilitators which impact physical activity (PA) behaviors of Latino adults in the United States.
- Together the individual, interpersonal, and community levels of the social ecological model can improve physical activity behaviors of Latino adults and work to reduce obesity rates to lead to a healthier population.

Recommendations

Future program recommendations include:
- A digital health component that targets the individual level and offers individualized information to participants
- An interpersonal aspect that incorporates social networks and social support (example: neighborhood walking groups)
- A community component that works to improve neighborhood walkability and offers information to participants on safe areas to engage in physical activities

References

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, December 8). Health of Hispanic or Latino population.