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The Determinants of Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior in the Asian Americans



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Introduction

Physical activity (PA) is crucial to a positive healthy lifestyle as it helps prevent and minimize various chronic diseases and mental health illnesses. According to the U.S. Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, individuals should participate in PA with aerobic moderate intensity of 150 minutes/week. Although the Asian American (AA) community is one of the fastest-growing marginalized minority groups in the United States, there is little research on PA behavior of the community.

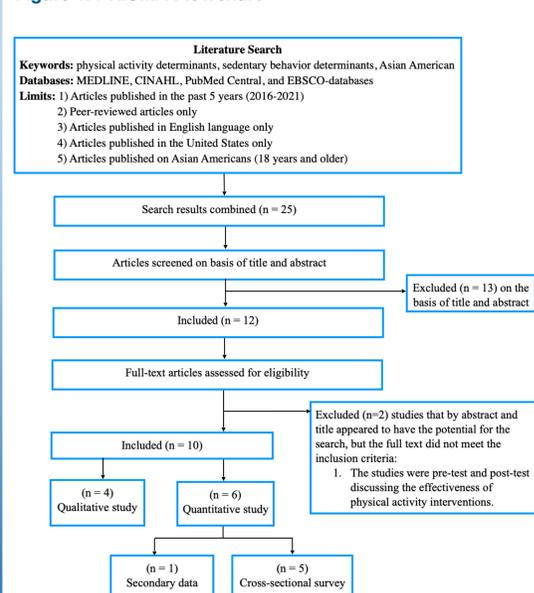
Purpose

This study aimed to investigate correlates and determinants of PA behavior among the Asian American population to bring about policy changes, design educational programs, and promote research on PA promotion among the AA community.

Methods

An extensive primary literature search was conducted in MEDLINE, CINAHL database, PubMed Central, and EBSCO databases using the key terms: physical activity and Asian Americans to include studies from the past five years (2016-2021). A total of 10 studies met the inclusion criteria depicted in the PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1). A thematic analysis was conducted to identify major themes and subthemes of determinants that influence PA behavior (Table 1).

Figure 1. PRISMA Flowchart



Results

The results of this study demonstrate the sociodemographic factors that impact an individual's perspective on PA. PA tends to increase with age; older adults engage in most PA of all age groups.

Table 1. Thematic Analysis

Themes	Subthemes	Codes
Positive Determinants	Self Motivation /Social	Emphasis on external beauty Motivational groups Optimal physical and psychological health Strong social support
	Personal Knowledge	Attended to college Employed
	Environmental Factors	Preferred activities like walking and chores Safe neighborhood for walks
	Sociological factors	Higher in 45+ years of age Higher income Men had more occupation and recreation related PA min/week Multiple age groups within the family structure Positive role models
	Physiological Factors	Lower BMI Underweight or normal weight
	Psychological Factors	Could look beautiful and attractive Get well-toned bodies to promote a sense of self-esteem Mental alertness
Negative Determinants	Role Expectation	Diminished social support Environmental constraints Lack of time Loss of interest
	Physiological Barriers	Having high blood pressure Joint pain Overweight or obese Physically exhausted Those who did not monitor their high blood pressure
	Environmental Barriers	Cold weather or snow Neighborhood stray dogs Not have a place to exercise at home
	Psychological Barriers	Feeling of depression Feeling of worthlessness Mentally exhausted
	Sociological factors	Lack of encouragement and open mindedness from family Not having health insurance Perceived as a "Western Behavior" by families and community Younger adults (18-44 years)

Discussion

Asian Americans have been documented to have lower levels of recreation-related PA and much higher sitting times than other racial/ethnic groups. Adults from 18 to 44 years of age, unemployed, and individuals who reside in a bad neighborhood are less likely to participate in PA. Sociodemographic factors including age, citizenship status, access to health care, education level, employment status, income, and neighborhood safety significantly affect PA behavior among AA adults.

Conclusion

Individuals in the Asian American community will benefit from this study as it will help promote guidelines of physical activity and its benefits. This will contribute to better personal health and promote preventative care against chronic diseases and mental health illnesses. This study can help contribute to the development of future health programs to increase overall physical activity and decrease sedentary behavior among the Asian American community from different socio-demographic backgrounds. Additionally, it can be used as a foundation to design an intervention to promote physical activity among the Asian American population.

References

References available upon request.

Acknowledgement

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