Examining Influences on Physical Activity in Girls 11-14 Years: The Physical Activity Lifestyle Influences (PALI) Study

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Introduction: Adolescents who are physically active on a daily basis are less likely to be overweight, and are more physically and mentally healthy than those who are not regularly physically active. The purpose of this descriptive correlational study is to examine the influence of personal characteristics, perceptual influences, interpersonal influences and sociocultural influences on physical activity in White and Hispanic adolescent girls. Research Questions: RQ1. How do personal characteristics (age, pubertal stage, BMI and ethnicity) influence physical activity in adolescent girls? RQ2. How do perceptual influences (physical activity enjoyment and body image) impact physical activity in adolescent girls? RQ3. How do interpersonal influences (family and friends) impact physical activity in Hispanic and White adolescent females? RQ5. How do personal characteristics, perceptual influences, interpersonal influences, and sociocultural influences combine to affect physical activity?

Method(s): 122 English and Spanish-speaking White and Hispanic girls 11-14 years of age were recruited via flyers, provider referrals, vaccination fairs, and sports physicals held at or run by the Children's Wellness Center (CWC) in Del Valle, Texas. All materials (flyers, consent forms, survey) were translated into Spanish by a native speaker. Data was collected using height/weight scales, and LimeSurvey, a free web-based survey creation program.

Results: Results are pending as data collection is still in progress. Descriptive statistics summarized the information and described the sample. T-tests determined whether Hispanic and White girls differ significantly in demographic characteristics. Multiple linear regression and Pearson correlations tested the research questions. Alpha is set at .05.

Discussion & Conclusions: Although prior research has addressed some of the factors in this study, no prior research has looked at how these factors combine to influence physical activity. When planning physical activity interventions, it is important to consider a more holistic model, taking into account the myriad factors that influence a patient’s compliance with a physical activity regimen.