C5-12: Promoting health and wellness in the borderlands: Perspectives on the incorporation of exercise into the lives of Latinas in the South Carolina Midlands and Texas border communities

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Abstract:
**Introduction:** ENLACE is a community-based participatory research project aimed at developing a community-based, culturally tailored physical activity program for Latinas exposed to social, economic, cultural, and linguistic marginalization in South Carolina (SC) Midlands and Texas (TX) border communities. The first phase of the research involved community-based assessments of factors that influence moderate intensity physical activity behaviors and patterns among Latinas in these two geographic areas.

**Method(s):** We conducted 26 interviews with a total of 28 community representatives (n=15 in SC; n=13 in TX) and 4 focus groups at each site, with 71 participants (n=35 in SC; n=36 in TX). All focus groups were conducted in Spanish; interviews were conducted in Spanish (n=18) and English (n=8). We coded transcripts in the source language; initially we open-coded transcripts individually, then developed a common coding scheme and subsequently recoded all transcripts using this scheme. We addressed coding questions and modifications through discussion and consensus.

**Results:** The majority (82%) of the sample was foreign-born, primarily from Mexico. Among foreign-born, the average length of residence in the US was 9 years (SC = 6.6 years; TX = 12.9 years). Participants identified social, cultural, environmental, and economic factors as impacting participation in moderate intensity physical activity. Common themes across both sites included the dominance of family responsibilities, work and employment constraints, changing dietary and cooking patterns, social isolation, cost, and public safety concerns. Site-specific barriers in South Carolina were linguistic isolation and discrimination and in Texas, environmental concerns (e.g., lack of sidewalks and dogs).

**Discussion & Conclusions:** Findings will be used to design and test a feasible and appealing community-based intervention. To address community preferences and barriers and enhance
adherence, the intervention will need to include low-cost options for group exercise activities, offered around women’s home and work schedules, in safe and accessible locations, and incorporate elements of social support and personal empowerment components.

Abstract History:
This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

Financial Disclosure:
No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

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