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PERCEPTIONS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ENGAGEMENT AMONG LATINX COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Physical activity among the Latinx community is insufficient. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015), 1 in 6 people residing in the US are Hispanic. The Latinx population is rapidly increasing; therefore, it is vital to understand their health care needs. Specific health problems are prevalent at a much higher rate among the Latinx population. The Centers for Disease Control (2015) state that the Latinx community is about 50% more likely to die from diabetes and other lifelong illnesses as opposed to Caucasians. College is a time when lifelong health patterns are established; students must develop healthier routines to maintain overall good health throughout their life. Despite a lack of studies on Latinx college students' physical activity, existing studies have indicated that Hispanics' ethnic-specific attitudes have contributed to their lack of physical activity engagement. Self-efficacy has been identified as a predictor of exercise adherence within the social cognitive theory; however, its applicability is limited within the Latinx community (McAuley & Blissmer, 2000). The purpose of the present study is to use the social-cognitive theory to explain the lack of physical activity among Latinx college students. This mixed-methods study will examine perceptions of physical activity and fitness among college students. These findings will provide a tailored and targeted direction for future health care practice and research to increase physical activity among the Latinx population. Preliminary data shows that 51% of all participants are currently not physically active but would like to be soon.