

## Research Brief

### Spirituality and Physical Activity and Sedentary Behavior among Latino Men and Women in Massachusetts

#### Overview

Latinos in the United States have high rates of obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Even though people can reduce their risk of developing these conditions by moving more and sitting less, almost 60% of Latino adults are not physically active for more than 150 minutes a week as recommended by the American College of Sports Medicine. Research also shows that they spend up to 74% of waking hours engaged in sedentary behaviors such as sitting while watching TV, using a computer, or driving/riding a car, bus, or train. Given the link between spirituality and general health in Latinos, we may be able to help this population move more and sit less by learning more about their spirituality.

#### Main Questions

- What is the relationship between spirituality and physical activity in a group of Latino adults?
- What is the relationship between spirituality and sedentary behavior in a group of Latino adults?

#### Study

This paper presents results of a cross-sectional analysis of the Lawrence Health and Well Being Study of 602 Latino adults in the city of Lawrence, Massachusetts. Using a Community Based Participatory Approach, the study was conducted by the City of Lawrence Mayor's Health Task Force, the Lawrence Senior Center, the YWCA of Greater Lawrence, the Greater Lawrence Family Health Center and the University of Massachusetts Medical School. Study participants were selected to answer survey questions, including demographic characteristics (age, gender, education, employment, education, history of smoking), physical activity (including walking), sedentary behavior (time spent sitting while doing different activities such as watching TV, using the computer, riding in a car or bus) and spirituality (how often they felt God's presence, found strength in religion, felt guided by God, etc.). Data was analyzed using the SPSS software.

#### The Bottom Line

In this study, people who are more spiritual are also less sedentary. This association was stronger in men than women.

#### Source

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#### Spotlight on Results

- **Sedentary behavior and spirituality among men:** Men with greater spirituality were significantly less sedentary ( $\beta = -.17$ ,  $P = .005$ ).
- **Physical activity and spirituality:** There were no significant associations between spirituality and physical activity among men or women.
- **Sedentary behavior and spirituality among women:** There was no relationship between sedentary behavior and spirituality among women.
- Although not statistically significant, Latinos who were more spiritual were more likely to be physically active. There was a significant negative relationship between spirituality and sedentary behavior ( $\beta = -.12$ ,  $p = .004$ ).

#### Call for Action

Understanding the link between spirituality and health behaviors (i.e. physical activity and sedentary behavior) in Latinos may help researchers develop more tailored behavior change interventions. Future research should consider investigating the impact of spirituality-based messages to reduce sedentary behavior among Latinos.