

FY 2009 RESEARCH PROBLEM STATEMENT

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TITLE

IM-09-08 Promoting Transportation Physical Activity among Minority Populations

PROBLEM (Description of need)

Promoting transportation physical activity as a strategy to engage more segments of society in the use of multimodal forms of transportation may be a timely intervention with the added benefit of increasing overall physical activity in a manner that is cost-effective, environmentally friendly, reduces congestion and also builds social cohesion. By enabling the safe, convenient movement of people and goods between homes, jobs, shopping, and recreation, multimodal transportation systems are essential to maintaining our quality of life and accommodating future growth and economic development. There is a need to learn more about the barriers to engaging in transportation physical activity among different segments of the population. Lack of physical activity is an important risk factor for chronic diseases and an important determinant for the prevention of obesity and for promoting healthy communities. Moreover, the literature detailing why racial and ethnic minorities participate in transportation physical activity is scarce. To date, no studies have been published that address the perceptions of racial and ethnic minority groups regarding strategies for stimulating transportation physical activity. There is a need to provide exploratory data to plan research that will help us understand the determinants of active transportation in racial and ethnic minorities. Despite the presence of some effective intervention strategies for promoting physical activity, little progress has been made at the population level, and this progress is not applicable to racial and ethnic minorities. Accordingly, there is still a lack of effective lifestyle interventions, such as transportation physical activity, among poor communities, while residents of these communities suffer disproportionately from cumulative health problems related to sedentary lifestyles.

PROPOSED RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT OR TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER ACTIVITY

Data will be collected using two methods to consult stakeholders: the Delphi technique and focus groups. The first round of the Delphi technique will consist of an "ideation session" with a facilitator and 30-40 participants (creative minds, experts, economists, scientists, local and national policy makers, health care professionals, fitness industry, health insurance companies, planners, employers, directors of schools, community organizers) in which any potentially effective transportation physical activity intervention strategy is considered. A list of strategies from the Delphi method will be the outcome of phase 1 of the proposal. Phase 2 will involve 8-10 focus group interviews with members of racial and ethnic minorities from predominantly minority neighborhoods, followed by a structured questionnaire. The aim of the focus group discussion is to identify strategies that are feasible and potentially effective in increasing the use of multimodal transportation techniques.

BENEFITS

One of the main outcomes will be the identification of feasible and promising strategies to promote transportation physical activity using the Delphi technique. This will be followed by an further investigation of a) the perceptions of transportation physical activity among racial and ethnic minorities and b) the extent to which contextual and cultural variables are important when delivering interventions with environmental strategies identified through the Delphi technique. Examples of environmental interventions may include pricing strategies or incentives, access, availability and safety parameters that are directly related to the use of public transportation and multimodal forms transportation. We will acquire this new information from perceptions, and contextual and cultural variables related to implementing a program to increase transportation physical activity.

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