

# BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES TO PHYSICAL INACTIVITY IN THE FILIPINO AMERICAN COMMUNITY

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## BACKGROUND

Physical activity (PA) is important in helping prevent chronic lifestyle disease, such as obesity, diabetes, and hypertension. However, it is difficult for ethnic minorities, especially the Filipino American population to engage in physical activity because of psychosocial barriers, such as lack of knowledge, support from family and friends, low motivation, and low self-efficacy. [1] Filipino Americans are one of the largest populations in the U.S. and are typically generalized as part of the Asian American population, but this misrepresents the entire subgroup, especially with Filipino Americans having higher rates of hypertension and obesity compared to the general Asian American population. [2] Not many studies focus on Filipino Americans specifically and there needs to be interventions implemented to address this gap.

## SOLUTION 1: INTERNATIONAL REHABILITATION AND GLOBAL HEALTH – BARRIERS AND STRATEGIES FOR REHAB MEDICINE

Access to rehabilitation services is currently a global issue and countries worldwide do not have the personnel to manage hospitals and patients requiring rehabilitative care. There are obstacles in continuing education to medical staff and the public on what rehabilitation is. The Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine (PARM) propose that the lack of travel and funding to rehabilitation programs worldwide is becoming a challenge for patients, especially with poor infrastructure in third-world countries. [3]

### Barriers

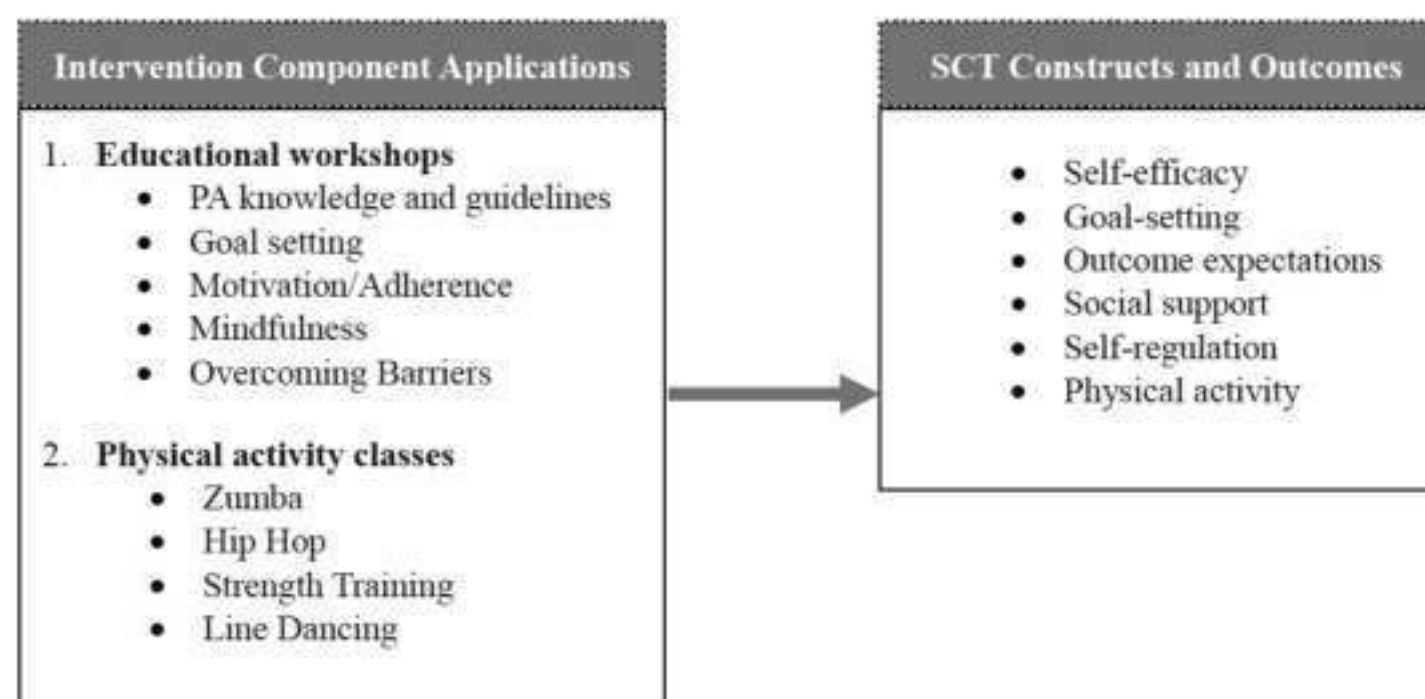
- Poor accessibility to national and local government hospitals in far-flung areas
- High cost of organizing scientific conferences and research funding
- Poor health literacy
- Lack of knowledge in technological resources
- Lack of community support groups

### Strategies

- Improving awareness and community initiatives for minority populations
- Improving access to care and resources for individuals in far-flung places
- Educating and engaging with the community through social media
- Training medical and allied health leaders to provide a fitness platform

## SOLUTION 2: PHILIPPINE AMERICAN PHYSIATRIST ASSOCIATION (PAPA) – FITNESS CONTENT

PAPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization to build and foster a sense of community amongst Filipino and Filipino-American physiatrists practicing in the United States. PAPA's mission is to embody the “bayanihan” spirit, which is the Filipino concept of helping one another as a community, in the field of physiatry. The vision is to improve the health of the community and one method is to create a platform to engage the community in fitness. PAPA has been establishing workout videos and a platform for displaying exercises that are friendly to those with physical limitations. Content is created by Filipino American fitness trainers and corrective exercise specialists with the supervision of physiatrists for safe and effective exercises for the global community to foster a sense of “bayanihan.” A study from Pennsylvania[1] displayed some interventional components that model some community programs across the nation, which used physical activity classes and workshops to improve self-efficacy and social support. Social support and physical activity enjoyment are shown to improve independent engagement in physical activity. [1]



**Figure 1.** Intervention components and related physical activity outcomes from educational workshops and weekly physical activity classes from Pennsylvania

Scale/ Subscale	Mean Difference (M; SD)	95% CI*
PA Outcome Expectations <sup>b</sup>		
Physical Outcome	0.23 (0.09)	(0.20, 0.26)
Social Outcome	0.29 (0.13)	(0.25, 0.33)
Self-Evaluative Outcome	0.43 (0.32)	(0.32, 0.54)
Physical Activity Enjoyment <sup>d</sup>	0.74 (0.36)	(0.62, 0.86)
Social Support – Family <sup>c</sup>	0.74 (0.35)	(0.62, 0.86)
Social Support – Friends <sup>c</sup>	0.73 (0.33)	(0.62, 0.84)
Exercise Goal-Setting <sup>d</sup>	0.50 (0.28)	(0.41, 0.59)

**Figure 2.** Dependent samples pre- and post-test results for psychosocial outcome measures following physical activity intervention by Pennsylvania study

## SUMMARY

- There are many barriers, which prevent physical activity in the Filipino American population, which includes lack of education, poor accessibility to rehabilitative resources, and poor community engagement
- Some strategies to mitigate chronic diseases in the Filipino American population is to promote a platform for physical activity, fitness content, and a community for all
- PAPA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization led by Filipino American Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation trainees and physicians dedicated to improve the health of the Filipino American community through the advancement of physiatry

## REFERENCES

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Philippine Academy of Rehabilitation Medicine

