Author's response to reviews

Title: The need to modify physical activity messages to better speak to older African American women: a qualitative study

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We would like you to consider the manuscript “The need to modify physical activity messages to better speak to older African American women: a qualitative study” for publication in the *BMC Public Health*. Combating the physical inactivity crisis and improve health and quality of life is a challenge and a public health priority, especially in underserved populations. Older African American woman is particularly vulnerable for physical inactivity and the resultant chronic diseases. Rates of physical activity participation at recommended levels in this group are one of the lowest. Previous research has shown that older African American women are not aware of the amount of physical activity that is needed to maintain or improve health and well-being. Additionally, researchers have found that mass communication messages have been shown to have limited effectiveness in reaching and impacting the health of underserved populations.

In this sense, the mentioned manuscript reflects a study that was designed to explore attitudes of older African American women to widely disseminated public information pertaining to physical activity and aging. Using a focus group analysis along with a simple quantitative analysis, we observed excited findings for this under-researched issue and this vulnerable population. The present study identifies some shortcomings in public health materials aimed to promote physical activity in the older adult population that together may be working as a barrier that detracts older African American women from the understanding and appreciation of the content provided in the materials. Promoting physical activity among underserved groups requires a concerted effort to identify factors that are specific to a particular group in order to develop the most effective behavior change strategy. We believe that our findings provide useful information for public health that can help to elaborate future more culturally sensitive messages aimed at promoting physical activity among older African American women.

Emerson Sebastião and co-authors.