



## Demographic characteristics and barriers for physical activity among adults residing at community La Mesa, Caguas, Puerto Rico 2012

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### Introduction

It is well recognized that physical activity (PA) plays an important role in the prevention of chronic diseases. In Puerto Rico, according to the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (2009) the prevalence of physical inactivity among Puerto Ricans was 72.0%. The aim of our study is to assess demographic characteristics and perceived barriers engaging in PA in a low income community in Puerto Rico.

### Methods

A total of 110 adults from community La Mesa at Caguas, Puerto Rico were surveyed through face to face interviews during December, 2012. To assess barriers and level engaging in PA, two instruments were used: The Global Physical Activity Questionnaire (GPAQ) and the Questionnaire of Perceived Barriers to Physical Activity Practice. A third survey was administered to collect socio-demographic data. Descriptive statistics were calculated using SPSS version 17.0.

### Results

41.8% of respondents did not meet PA recommendations of which 34.8% were overweight and 32.6% obese. Females (60.9%) and people age 55 and older (41.3%) were more inactive. 7.4% of inactive people presented three or more chronic diseases. Overall, the most frequently reported barriers included “lack of self-discipline” (43.5%), “physical condition does not allow me to exercise” (37.0%) , “lack of a safe and convenient place” (37.0%), ) and “lack of time” 34.8%).

### Conclusion

An immediate process for planning and implementing educational and interventional prevention strategies, focused specifically in lowering the prevalence of PI, is recommended. Action is required to address infrastructural and behavioral aspects in Puerto Rican communities to promote healthy lifestyle and PA.

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