Feasibility and acceptability of using pedometers as an intervention tool for Latinas.

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BACKGROUND: Due to high rates of inactivity and related chronic illnesses among Latinas, the current study examined the feasibility and acceptability of using pedometers as an intervention tool in this underserved population.

METHODS: Data were taken from a larger randomized, controlled trial2 and focused on the subsample of participants (N = 43) who were randomly assigned to receive a physical activity intervention with pedometers and instructions to log pedometer use daily and mail completed logs back to the research center each month for 6 months.

RESULTS: Retention (90.7% at 6 months) and adherence to the pedometer protocol (68.89% returned ≥ 5 of the 6 monthly pedometer logs) were high. Overall, participants reported increased physical activity at 6 months and credited pedometer use for helping them achieve these gains (75.7%). Participants who completed a high proportion (≥ 5/6) of pedometer logs reported significantly greater increases in physical activity and related process variables (stages of change, self-efficacy, behavioral processes of change, social support from friends) than those who were less adherent (completed < 5 pedometer logs).

CONCLUSIONS: Pedometers constitute a low-cost, useful tool for encouraging self-monitoring of physical activity behavior in this at-risk group.