Title: A Tool, Not a Replacement: Young Latino Men's Perspectives on AI Tools for Physical Activity Promotion

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Background: Despite robust evidence of the health benefits of physical activity (PA), levels remain low among young adults, particularly Latino men. Emerging tools like generative artificial intelligence (AI) may offer accessible, low-cost, and personalized PA support for this population. However, evidence informing AI tools may not reflect the needs of young Latino men, who are underrepresented in health and PA research. Understanding their perspectives is important for developing effective AI-based PA tools.

Methods: Latino men aged 18–25 who had previously used generative AI and were willing to make PA changes completed a semi-structured interview via Zoom. Interviews examined experiences with AI, perceived usefulness of AI for PA, trust in AI, barriers to using AI, and desired features for an AI tool. Interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and coded independently by two researchers using an emergent thematic approach; final codes were reached by consensus.

Results: Participants (N=12) were young Latino men (mean age = 20.3 years); most were students (n = 11) and (n=10) reported meeting national guidelines for weekly aerobic PA. Four broad themes emerged to characterize participants' perspectives. First, they view AI as a convenient tool for personalizing workout, nutrition, and goal-setting guidance. Second, their trust depends on scientific credibility and transparency including citations and involvement from exercise, nutrition, and health professionals. Third, they view AI as a supplement rather than a replacement for human expertise, particularly for guidance involving exercise technique, injury risk, and nutrition. Although they value the speed, affordability, and accessibility of AI, they prefer human guidance for exercise technique, injury risk, and individualized health information. Fourth, their long-term engagement depends on a simple interface, visible progress, feedback, reminders, check-ins, and accountability.

Conclusions: Young Latino men are receptive to AI-based PA tools. Consistent with prior research in other populations, participants valued the personalized advice AI can provide. However, they also stressed that advice from an AI tool needs to be backed by visible scientific evidence and endorsed by health professionals to be trusted. These insights will inform the future design and testing of an AI-based PA support tool for this population.