

Background

Salud al Pasito: Small Steps Toward Better Health is a continuing project that serves the San Antonio community by providing a venue for members of the community to begin, or continue, their journey to a healthier lifestyle. In Bexar County, two of the major health concerns are obesity and diabetes. Figures from the San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (SAMHD) estimate that 65% of San Antonio adults are considered obese or overweight, and a 30% obesity rate exists among high school students¹. Similarly, approximately 14% of San Antonio's population suffers from diabetes, and nearly 28% of San Antonio area deaths are cardiovascular-related, according to the American Diabetes Association². Mild physical activity has been shown to significantly improve, and even control, chronic health problems including obesity, diabetes, osteoarthritis, hypertension, and other cardiac issues. Therefore, *Salud al Pasito* has sought to implement educationally driven health fairs and walking events to educate and inform San Antonians about sustainable health practices aimed at combating and preventing these city-wide health issues. In particular, we have focused on outreach toward underserved communities, such as District 6, where 21.6% of residents are below the federal poverty limit, to promote healthier lifestyles in communities that may have a greater need for this information and service³.



Figure A (left)
Co-president Neveda Murugesan along with research committee members Morgan Fletcher and Matt Straight welcome walk attendees and use pre-walk surveys to assess baseline wellness attitudes and concern.

Materials & Methods

- Pre-walk surveys are issued asking information regarding age, motivation to exercise, native language and comfort level speaking to healthcare professionals in this language, as well as how a language disconnect might influence their likelihood of going to see a healthcare professional.
- Post-walk surveys are composed of 10 questions. These questions survey frequency of walking per week, intensity level of exercise per week, efforts to walk more often after *Salud al Pasito* events, frequency and comfort talking with healthcare professionals, primary sources of healthcare information, and barriers to achieving healthcare goals.
- All survey materials are available in both Spanish and English versions for participants to complete.
- The "Wall of Issues" survey asks participants to identify the top 3 health concerns facing their community by placing three stickers into columns representing diseases, including obesity, diabetes, heart disease, smoking/lung disease, mental health, drug abuse, and alcoholism. The stickers are colored according to age category (0-17, 18-40, 41-65, and greater than 65).

Figure B (right).
The "Wall of Issues" demonstrates that diabetes, obesity, and high blood pressure are the top 3 overall health concerns surveyed at *Salud al Pasito's* events. Each participant identifies the three main health concerns for their age group in their community.



Wall of Issues Data, Sept 2013-Jan 2016 (n=2035)

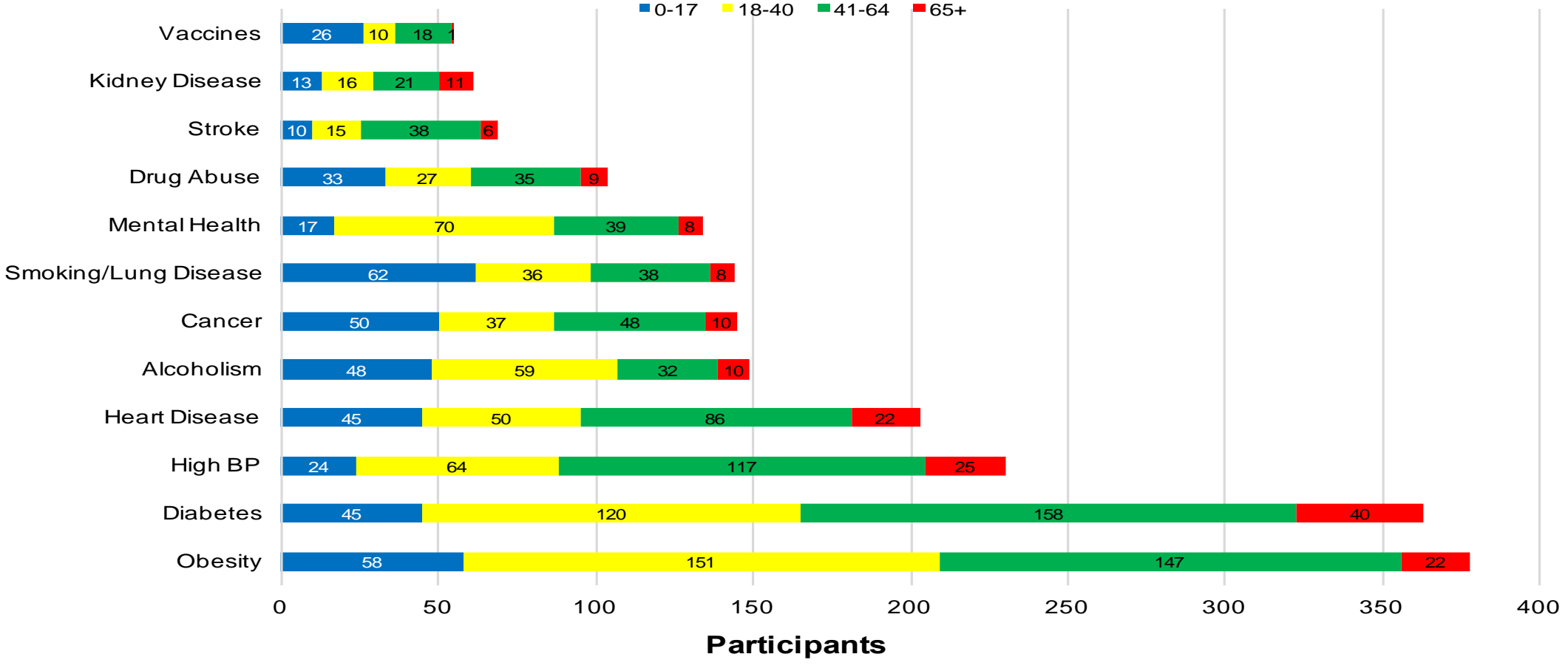


Figure C. From our walking and health fair events held from September 2013 until January 2016, a total of 2,035 responses regarding top community health concerns from individuals living near Cuellar Park, Woodlawn Lake Park, and Wonderland of the Americas Mall. For all age groups, the top concerns were obesity (18.6%) and diabetes (17.8%). The next most important concerns were high blood pressure (11.3%) and heart disease (10.0%). Overall, most respondents were aged between 41-64 years (38.1%), with second most between ages 18-40 (32.2%).

Results

- Figure C** shows data from the Wall Of Issues. A total of 2,035 responses were collected regarding top community health concerns from individuals living near Cuellar Park, Woodlawn Lake Park, and Wonderland of the Americas Mall. Across all age groups, diabetes (18.6%) and obesity (17.8%) were the two main concerns. High blood pressure (11.3%) and heart disease (10.0%) were the next most important concerns. Most respondents were aged between 41-64 years (38.1%), with second most between ages 18-40 (32.2%).
- Table 1** shows the top three health concerns for each age group surveyed. There were a variety of health concerns across the age groups.
- Less than 30% of participants walked the recommended amount of 30 minutes per day at a moderate pace (can talk but not sing). Therefore, a majority of the surveyed participants are not walking the minimum amount to have health benefits⁴ (**Figure D**).
- 87% of participants agreed to make an effort to walk more often after participating in a *Salud al Pasito* walk event (**Figure E**).

Age Group	#1 Concern	#2 Concern	#3 Concern
0-17	Smoking/Lung Disease (14.4%)	Obesity (13.5%)	Cancer (11.6%)
18-40	Obesity (23.1%)	Diabetes (18.3%)	Mental health (10.7%)
41-64	Diabetes (20.3%)	Obesity (18.9%)	High blood Pressure (15.1%)
65+	Diabetes (23.1%)	High blood pressure (15.1%)	Heart disease/obesity (12.8%)

Table 1. Top three health concerns for each age group, utilizing data from the Wall Of Issues (Figure A). Age group 0-17 (n=431), 18-40 (n=655), 41-64 (n=777), 65+ (n=172).

Conclusions

Based on the data from the Wall Of Issues, the two main health concerns in the San Antonio area are obesity and diabetes. According to the American Heart Association, walking 30 minutes per day has been shown to lower the risk of obesity, reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, as well as reduce high blood pressure⁴. *Salud al Pasito* recognizes the substantial health benefits tied to walking, which is why its main tenet is to promote regular walking habits and awareness of the associated benefits. Data collected from these walking events have shown that when exposed to the information about the health benefits of walking, a vast majority of participants have stated that they are willing to make an effort to walk more often. Future research can be devoted to following up with participants about their stated walking goals. In order to address the main concerns of the community, *Salud al Pasito* has identified the youth as an appropriate population towards whom to devote primary prevention efforts. Given that the two main concerns in the community are obesity and diabetes, and that obesity falls within the top two concerns of participants aged 0-17, it is crucial that prevention efforts are directed towards this population. As such, we have recently started participating in local elementary schools' health fairs in an attempt to promote awareness of the health benefits of walking.

Acknowledgements

This project was funded by the Center for Medical Humanities and Ethics, the School of Medicine Alumni Association and HEB (logos at top).

References

- "Physical Activity in Bexar County." City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District. 2013 <<https://www.sanantonio.gov/Portals/0/Files/health/HealthyLiving/FactSheet-Obesity.pdf>>
- "Diabetes.org: In My Community: Local Offices: San Antonio, Texas." American Diabetes Association. 2014 <<http://www.diabetes.org/in-my-community/local-offices/san-antonio-texas/>>
- "San Antonio, Texas: Detailed information about poverty and poor residents in San Antonio, TX." 2013. CityData.com. <http://www.city-data.com/city/San-Antonio-Texas.html#boxMAPborder>
- "Why Walking?" 2014. http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/HealthyLiving/PhysicalActivity/Walking/Why-Walking_UCM_461770_Article.jsp#.VvG-NlkrYU

How Often Do You Walk Per Week?

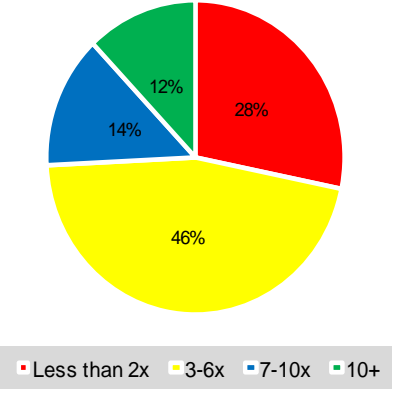


Figure D. Participants were asked how often they walked per week, quantified in 30 minute intervals (n=124).

After participating in this walk, I will make an effort to walk more often.

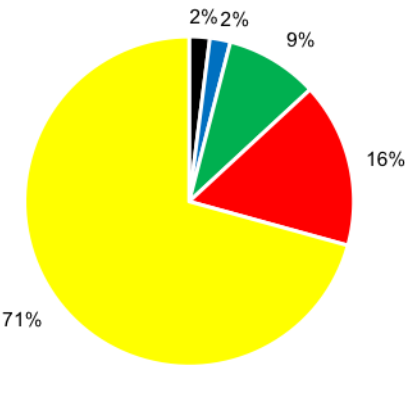


Figure E. Participants were asked whether or not the walking event changed their attitudes about walking more often (n=99).