

Preliminary Findings from a “Not Yoga” Study among African American Churchgoers

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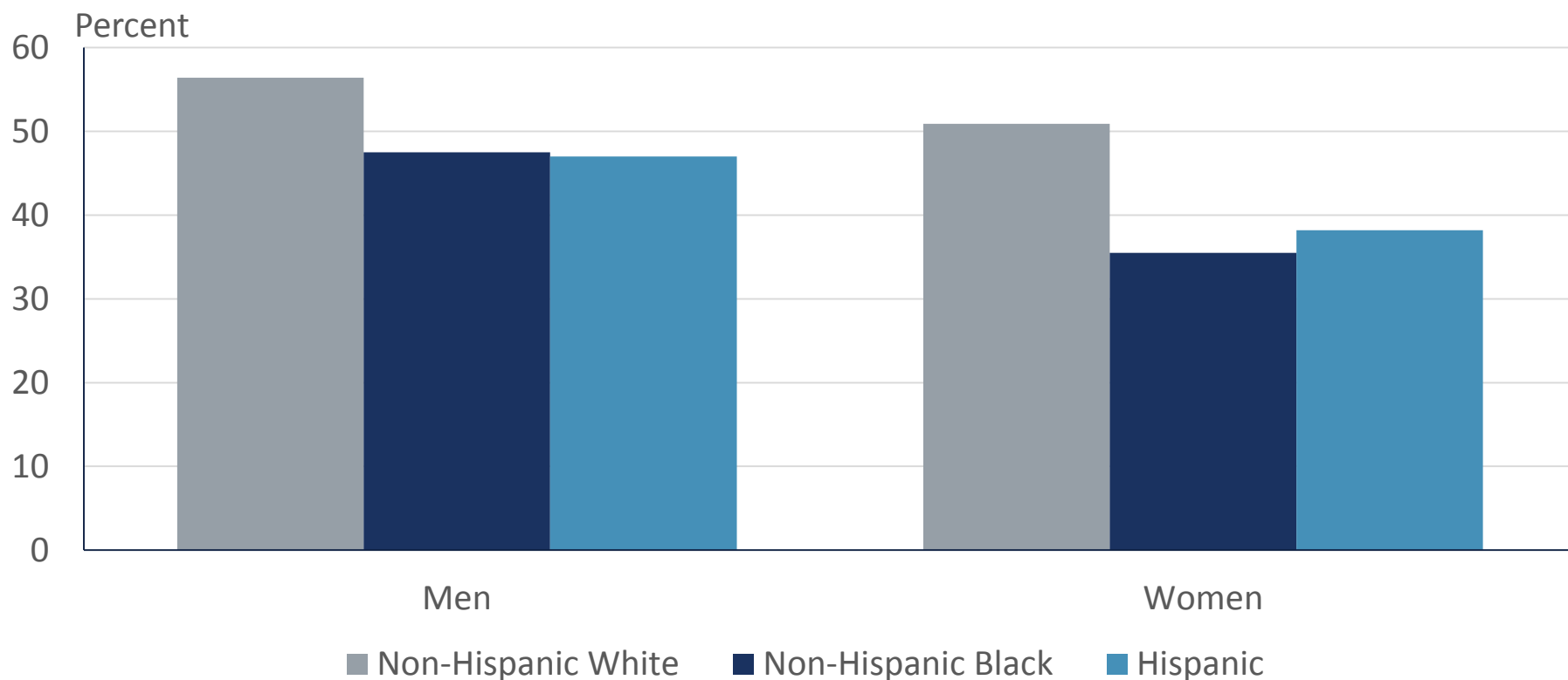
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African American adults continue to be less physically active than their white counterparts

Percentage of U.S. adults meeting 2008 leisure-time aerobic physical activity guidelines



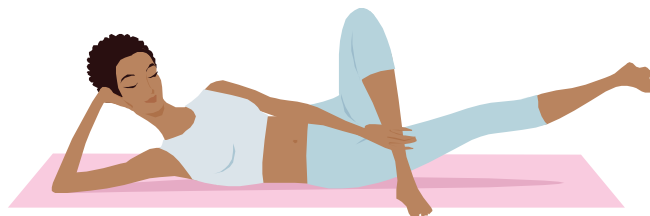
Mind-body practices improve physical and psychological health and well-being

- Mind-body practices unite body and mind through postures and breathing and
 - Improve physical function
 - Improve immune function
 - Reduce blood pressure
 - Attenuate weight gain
 - Improve overall health and wellness
- Widely accepted as effective for improving physical and psychological well-being
- 10.4 million Americans practice yoga



Harmony & Health aims

1. To determine the **feasibility** of recruiting and implementing a mind-body intervention among sedentary, overweight or obese African American adults
2. To pilot test and evaluate the efficacy of a mind-body intervention to promote physical activity adoption and maintenance



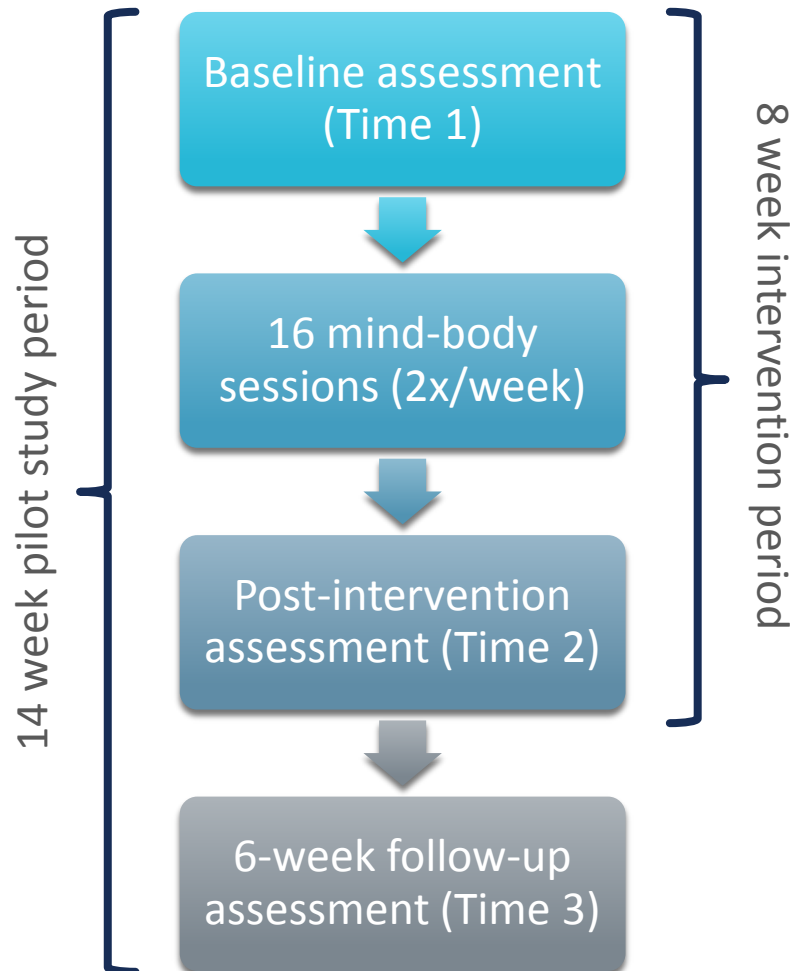
Step 1: Cultural-adaptation of a mind-body program for African American churchgoers

- Historical resistance to yoga or meditation among Christians
 - Practicing another religion
 - Grounding to the ground versus God
 - An idle mind is the devil's playground
- Resistance to yoga specifically among Project CHURCH community liaisons
 - De-emphasize yoga and emphasize “not yoga”

Step 1: Cultural-adaptation of a mind-body program for African American churchgoers

TRADITIONAL YOGA SESSION	HARMONY & HEALTH SESSION
Set an intention for your yoga practice	Introduce the scripture of the day (e.g., "I can do all things through Him who gives me strength." Phillippians 4:13)
Yoga postures or poses (asanas) with flow	Stretching and breathing using culturally and physically appropriate poses
Shavasana (corpse pose) with meditation or cool down <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empty your mind of thoughts• Focus on breath• Beginning of deeper meditative practices	Guided relaxation focusing on scripture of the day <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Focus on breath• Focus on God and His word

Step 2: Recruitment of African American churchgoers to a “not yoga” study



Eligibility criteria

- Self-identify as African American
- 18-65 years old
- Overweight or obese (BMI 25-44 kg/m²)
- Generally healthy and able to pass the PAR-Q
- Sedentary or not currently regularly exercising (defined as <75 min/week or <15 min/day)

Feasibility outcomes of interest

- Recruitment and retention of participants
 - Successfully recruit target sample ($N=50$)
 - $\geq 80\%$ of participants complete post-intervention (Time 2) and follow-up (Time 3) assessments
- Intervention adherence (10 out of 16 sessions)
- Program satisfaction
 - Satisfaction survey
 - In-depth exit interviews

Participant recruitment

197 interested CHURCH participants

- 26 pending screening/unable to contact
- 14 not interested

157 contacted and screened for eligibility

- 69 ineligible (physically active, BMI ≥ 45 kg/m²)

88 eligible for baseline (Time 1) assessment

- 24 health compromising condition/need physician's clearance
- 14 did not schedule appointment/did not show/canceled

50 enrolled and randomized

- 26 mind-body intervention
- 24 wait-list control

Participant characteristics (N=50)

	INTERVENTION (N=26)	CONTROL (N=24)
	<i>M (SD)</i>	<i>M (SD)</i>
Age (years)	50.1 (9.7)	49.3 (9.2)
Blood pressure (mmHg)	133.0/79.0 (11.2/8.6)	130.9/79.2 (10.9/10.0)
BMI (kg/m ²)	33.9 (5.3)	31.6 (4.9)
Body fat (%)	42.6 (7.5)	41.1 (8.6)
Waist to hip ratio	0.8 (0.1)	0.8 (0.1)
	% (N)	% (N)
Education ≥bachelor degree	46.1 (12)	62.5 (15)
Income \$40,000-79,999/year	46.2 (12)	52.2 (12)
Employed	73.1 (19)	75.0 (18)
Married/Living with partner	34.6 (9)	25.0 (6)
1 or more children	73.1 (19)	66.7 (16)

Participant retention

50 completed baseline assessment

- 26 intervention
- 24 control

80% completed post-intervention assessment

- 24 intervention
- 16 control

82% completed 6-week follow-up assessment

- 25 intervention
- 16 control

Intervention adherence

26 randomized to mind-body intervention

- 4 dropped prior to start of intervention
- 20 attended Session 1

22 participants remained in intervention

- 4 missed sessions due to illness/family illness
- 2 missed sessions due to work/travel schedules

16 participants attended ≥ 10 sessions over 8 weeks

- 6 attended ≥ 13 sessions
- 10 attended 10-12 sessions

Program satisfaction

- 100% satisfied with Harmony & Health overall
 - 75% extremely satisfied with stretches
 - 75% extremely satisfied with guided relaxation
- 75% felt the program was just right
 - Sessions lasted 45-60 minutes
 - Sessions took place twice a week
 - Program lasted 8 weeks
- 100% would recommend Harmony & Health to their friends and family

Harmony & Health is feasible among African American churchgoers

- Met recruitment ($N=50$) and retention ($\geq 80\%$) goals
- 72.7% of participants adhered to the “not yoga” study and attended $\geq 10/16$ sessions
- Participants were largely satisfied with Harmony & Health and would recommend it to their friends and family

Conclusions and Implications

- Harmony & Health may be an innovative way to
 - Intertwine spirituality, mind-body practices and physical activity
 - Keep churchgoers engaged
 - Reduce health disparities
- Next steps include
 - Evaluating physical activity and secondary outcomes
 - Testing Harmony & Health in a larger, representative sample

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■ Collaborators

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- Christopher P. Fagundes (Department of Psychology, Rice University)
- Alejandro Chaoul and Lorenzo Cohen (Department of Palliative, Rehabilitation and Integrative Medicine, The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center)

■ Harmony & Health participants, volunteers and staff

Thank you for your attention!

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