1. **Title:**

Psychosocial and perceived environmental influences on physical activity in full time female university administrative assistants.

1. **Investigator(s):**

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1. **Summary of the Research:**

The purpose of this research is to gain insight into psychosocial and perceived environmental influences on physical activity in full time female university administrative assistants. Obesity and overweight conditions have risen in adult females to 35.5% on a national level. Physical activity has been associated with a person’s level of health.

Due to the nature of a university administrative assistant’s job the amount of physical activity associated or required to the job is minimal. This creates a sedentary job for women who may already be overweight or obese. The combination of a sedentary job with a higher prevalence of obesity translates to greater health risk.

Gaining insight into the factors that may influence physical activity for these women with sedentary jobs may be useful in developing university policy to encourage and support physical activity among this population. The information gained may also be useful to current university programs designed to increase health and wellness among employees at Texas State University.

**Background and Literature Review:**

The benefits of physical activity on mental and physical health are well known (United States Department of Health and Human Services [USDHHS], 2008). These benefits have been outlined in a number of federal documents and initiatives including, the *Healthy People 2010* (USDHHS, 2000) and the *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans* (USDHHS, 2008). For example, the Healthy People 2010 was established to address physical activity as an agent in promoting the quality and number of years of a healthy life and to eliminate health disparities (quality of health and health care) among different segments of the United States population. Of interest, is that physical activity was identified as one of ten health indicators (areas of concern) for the nation during the new century (USDHHS, 2000). Thus, physical activity has become relevant to national public health efforts in the United States, particularly among adults. The lack of adequate physical activity has been linked with the current overweight and obesity epidemic affecting our nation (Mokdad, Marks, Stroup, & Gerberding, 2004).

Similar to physical inactivity, overweight and obesity have become a major health problem. For Texans, The Center for Disease Control (CDC) reports a 28.3 % rate of obesity among adults (men and women combined). For the country as a whole, the current prevalence of obesity among men is 32.2% and 35.5% among women. These percentages have continued to rise since the data were first being obtained and recorded in 1999 (Flegal et al., 2010). It is evident that women have a higher prevalence of obesity than men. Therefore, increasing physical activity among women may help in reducing risks for overweight and obesity.

Physical activity for adults is important to maintain health and independent functioning. In fact, there is evidence to suggest that initiating, no matter at what age, and continuing physical activity was associated with better body function and survival rates (Gregg et al., 2003; Stessman et al., 2009). The amount of physical activity has been shown to be directly related to one’s level of health (USDHHS, 2008). Unfortunately, despite its benefits, more than half of the world’s population remains physically inactive. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that at least 60% of the world population is sedentary. Sedentary has been defined as physical activity less than 30 minutes per day most days of the week. Similar to that of obesity, it appears that women tend to be considerably less active than men.

The higher risk for obesity and the low levels of physical activity among women are of greater concern among adult women whose work duties require them to spend a significant portion of their day inactive (or sitting) such as administrative assistants. For administrative assistants working at the university level, the nature of their work requires long periods of sitting and relative inactivity, in essence, a sedentary job. The combination of a sedentary job with a higher prevalence of obesity and inactivity in women translates to greater health risk so we must develop strategies to increase physical activity among this population of adult women. However, no research has addressed the physical activity needs of this population. Furthermore, there is no information on how physically active or what factors may impact physical activity participation among adult administrative assistant women at the college/university.

A number of scholars (Bauman, Sallis, Dzewaltowski, & Owen, 2002; Baranowski, Anderson, & Carmack, 1998) have suggested that potential variables to explain or predict physical activity should be drawn from sound theoretical frameworks. Among those, Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) has been one of the most widely used theoretical frameworks in explaining physical activity participation among adults (USDHHS, 1996). Social cognitive theory [SCT] (Bandura, 2004) has constructs that examine the underlying mechanisms affecting human behavior. Among the theoretical constructs within SCT, psychosocial and environmental factors have been associated with physical activity behavior change in adults (Hallam & Petosa, 2004; Sherwood & Jeffery, 2000; Trost, Owen, Bauman, Sallis, & Brown, 2002; USDHHS, 1996). Thus, SCT may be useful in identifying factors that may affect physical activity participation among administrative assistant women at a university.

Only one research study, completed by Harrison et al. (1997), included application of the Social Cognitive Theory in a university setting and involved computer use. To the knowledge of the researcher, there is no evidence of research that examines potential variables that may support or hinder physical activity participation among full-time adult female university administrative assistants using social cognitive theory as conceptual framework. Thus, research on this area is needed.

**Research Purpose and Objectives:**

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore the psychosocial and environmental factors that may promote or prevent physical activity among full-time adult (> 21 years of age) females employed as an administrative assistant at the university level. Using social cognitive theory as conceptual framework, the research will address the following questions:

1. What are the current levels of physical activity among full-time female university administrative assistants?
2. What existing psychosocial variables may influence physical activity participation among full-time female university administrative assistants?
3. What are the campus-wide environmental variables that may influence physical activity participation among full-time female university administrative assistants?
4. What demographic variables may affect physical activity participation among full-time female university administrative assistants?

**IV. Human Subject Interactions**

1. **Sources of Potential Participants:**

All participants will be recruited from Texas State University (main campus). It is expected to include all full-time administrative assistants in the university’s database. To be included, participants will need to be: (a) adult women (21+), (b) a full-time employee at Texas State University, and (c) job position as administrative assistant. Based on information from Human Resources, the anticipated participant pool is 200 women.

1. **Procedures for the Recruitment of Participants and Obtaining Consent:**

Recruitment of participants will be conducted by the following methods: (a) contact via email-generated message via university’s mail list-server and (b) word-of-mouth among administrative staff. A recruitment flyer will be developed and distributed electronically. When potential participants are identified, consent for research will be obtained before the online survey (i.e., data collection) is done. In the event that online survey is not available, a written consent form (with Texas State University requirements) will be obtained (see attached). It will be the responsibility of the researcher (i.e., Susan Bradley) to obtain all consents from participants before survey is administered.

1. **Research Methods and Activities:**

Adult administrative assistant women (21 or older) will be included in this study. Consent forms from participants will be obtained. Demographic data will be obtained and analyzed using descriptive statistics. To gather data, already existing questionnaires will be used to attain participants’ physical activity levels, their perceived benefits and barriers related to physical activity. These include:

1. *Self-Efficacy for Physical Activity*: Self-efficacy will be assessed using questions from the Self-Efficacy for Exercise Scale [SEE] (Resnick & Jenkins, 2000). Self-efficacy addresses the confidence level a person has of being able to actually accomplish a desired task, in this case, physical activity. Participants will rate their answer on a Likert scale with one being *not likely/confident*, two being *may be likely/confident*, three being *likely/confident*, four being *highly likely/confident* and five being *probable/ confident*. A sample question from the SEE is: *How likely would you be to participate in physical activity if: (a) the weather was bothering you? (b) you were bored by the program or activity?; (c) you had to exercise alone?; (d) you did not enjoy the activity?; and (e) you were busy with other activities?*
2. *Outcome Expectations for Physical Activity*: Outcome expectations will be assessed using questions from the *Outcome Expectations for Exercise Scale* [OEE] (Resnick et al. 2001). Questions from this survey address an individual’s belief that a particular action will produce a particular consequence or result. Subjects will rate their answers according to a Likert scale with one being *strongly disagree*, two being *disagreed*, three being *neither agree nor disagree*, four being *agree* and five being *strongly agree*. Sample questions from the questionnaire include: *physical activity makes me feel better physically*; *physical activity makes my mood better in general*; *physical activity makes my muscles stronger*; and *physical activity helps strengthen my bones*.
3. *Physical Activity Behavior:* physical activity will be assessed using questions from the International Physical Activity Questionnaire for Young and Middle-Aged Adults [IPAQ-YMAA] (Hagstromer, Oja, & Sjostrom, 2006; Hallal & Victoria, 2004). Questions from this survey address actual physical activity the person participates in. Participants will choose specific answer choices that are given such as 1-2days/week, 3-4 days/week, 5-7 days/week, “yes” , “no” or 10 minutes/day, 20 minutes/day, 30 minutes/day, more than 30 minutes/day. Sample questions from this self-report include: *typically, how many days per week do you perform moderate physical activities for a period of at least 10 minutes?... Do you think that physical activity is good for your health?*... *If you decided to start a program to increase physical activity or you already do so now, do you know of a place where you can go to get advice/help on how to go about it?*

Participants will be classified as sedentary or active condition according to their self-reported physical activity. To better understand the relationship between social cognitive variables and physical activity, multiple regression analysis will be used to examine their predictive value.

1. **Potential Risks:**

There are no foreseeable risks to participants from responding to questionnaires and/or participating in this study. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study, and that can be identified with the participant will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with their permission. The data collected in this study may also be reanalyzed and used in future studies and publications. Neither in the present study nor in any future analyses of these data will the participants be individually identified. The researcher will have access to the data. All the files and data related to this study will be kept secure in a lock-key cabinet.

1. **Reasonably Anticipated Benefits:**

There are no immediate benefits for participants in this proposed study. However, potential findings provide relevant information that could be use by the university’s administration to affect policy related to improving the physical activity (e.g., programs, incentives) and health of full-time employees like administrative assistant women.

1. **Incentives to Participate:**

There will be no incentives for participation in this study. All participants will be informed that their participation or non-participation in this study is voluntary and their decision will not influence their present or future involvement with Texas State University-San Marcos. From a personal standpoint, participants may see as satisfaction the opportunity of learning about the potential results of the study and the opportunity to help a graduate student reach her goals.

1. **Sites or Agencies Involved in the Research Project:**

Research study will be conducted at the Texas State University (main campus). A letter of support from the Office of Human Resources that has been requested is pending. However, as a graduate student on campus the researcher has access to mail list-serve of target population.

1. **Review by Another IRB:**

This protocol is submitted for its approval only to Texas State University-San Marcos IRB. This proposal is for a M.Ed. with a specialization in Exercise Science. The Committee Chair who is responsible for supervision is Dr. Carlos Cervantes (assistant professor, HPER). Thesis committee approval attached.

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