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Title: The medically underserved: **who is likely to exercise and why?**

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Abstract: Adults who exercise regularly have better health, but only 15% of U. S. adults engage in regular exercise, with some social groups, such as people with lower incomes and women, having even lower rates. This study investigates the rate at which medically underserved patients receive exercise counseling from health care providers, characteristics of those who exercise, and barriers and motivations to exercise. The convenience sample was predominantly female and White and exclusively low-income and uninsured or underinsured. On average, participants were obese, by Federal Obesity Guidelines; 43% smoked. Although 60% of 126 patients reported that providers discussed exercise with them, the discussions had no relationship with patients' engagement in exercise. Women and those with lung problems, diabetes, or children in the home were less likely than others surveyed to exercise. The highest rated motivations included body image and health issues. The most important barriers were time, cost, and access to exercise facilities and equipment. In order for exercise counseling to be more effective, health care providers' interventions must consider patients' personal characteristics, health status, readiness to engage in an exercise program, and motivations and barriers to exercise.

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Female. Humans. Male.