

Learning more

Something that I don't recall reading in the previous two studies but which is mentioned in this study is that participants who were less than 50% adherent at year one were provided with a home training program, including a resistance band and an appropriately sized fitness ball. This makes the adherence figures for year two even more surprising and shocking, unless those who then completed more limited training at home for year two were still counted as not adhering to the strength training programme for the purpose of the adherence figures. The limited home training would at least keep their strength gains a little more relevant for the strength development figures in the main study.

Focus groups

It seems that the authors were particularly interested in the difference in adherence between the different racial groups, splitting the study participants into two groups: Caucasian and coloured (indicating the racial and ethnic diversity among participants, which included African American, Asian American, Native American and multiracial participants). I can't really understand why race should have been a relevant factor in adherence but the authors note that "lower adherence was more apparent among women of color, who comprised one-third of the study sample". Perhaps we'll understand better after looking at the results from the focus groups.

In the summer of 2004, early in the second year of the study, all of the women classified as coloured (31 women in total) were invited to take part in focus groups to discuss their experiences. Of these, 25 agreed to participate. In the following winter a similar focus group was put together from the Caucasian women with an attempt to match the coloured group in demographic presentation. To do this the authors tried to get the group to match the overall demographic split in the following areas:

- adherence level (above or below 80%)
- education (high school or less vs. some post-secondary education)
- family structure (no children, single parent, parenting with a partner)

In total the Caucasian group consisted of 24 women.

Issues discussed

I'm going to quote directly from the study here:

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