

# Quality Improvement Initiative to Decrease Obesity Rate by Providing Access to Exercise in Low Socioeconomic Population

Kaviya Sathyakumar M.D.1,2 ; Hira Hussain M.D.1,2 ; Lizbeth Zambrano D.O. .1,2; Amisa Patel D.O.1,2; Amber Patel D.O.1,2; Stephanie Anderson M.D.1,2 1: University of Central Florida; 2: Heart of Florida Health Center

## Background

According to CDC, obesity prevalence in 2017-2018 was 42.4%, an increase from 30.5% in 1999-2000. Per Marion County Health Department, 65% of adults are considered to be at unhealthy weight. Obesity can be a result of poor diet, lack of exercise, and increased stress. Several observational studies confirm that obesity is largely related to low socioeconomic status (LES). "Researchers have shown that low-income neighborhoods attract more fast-food outlets and convenience stores as opposed to full-service supermarkets and grocery stores".<sup>2</sup> Many of these neighborhoods may also not be safe to exercise outdoors or people may not have access to gym. People in low socioeconomic status have increased financial burden, which can lead to increased stress. Combination of increased consumption of fast food, lack of exercise, and increased stress can be the cause of increased rate of obesity in this population. Targeting at least one aspect of cause of obesity, such as regular exercise, can help navigate people towards a better lifestyle and lead to weight loss. In one study, of nine indicators of physical activity tested, people with median household income showed highest correlation to physical activity. Access to resources for routine and safe exercise can contribute to low rate of physical activity in low socioeconomic classes.

## Hypothesis/Objective

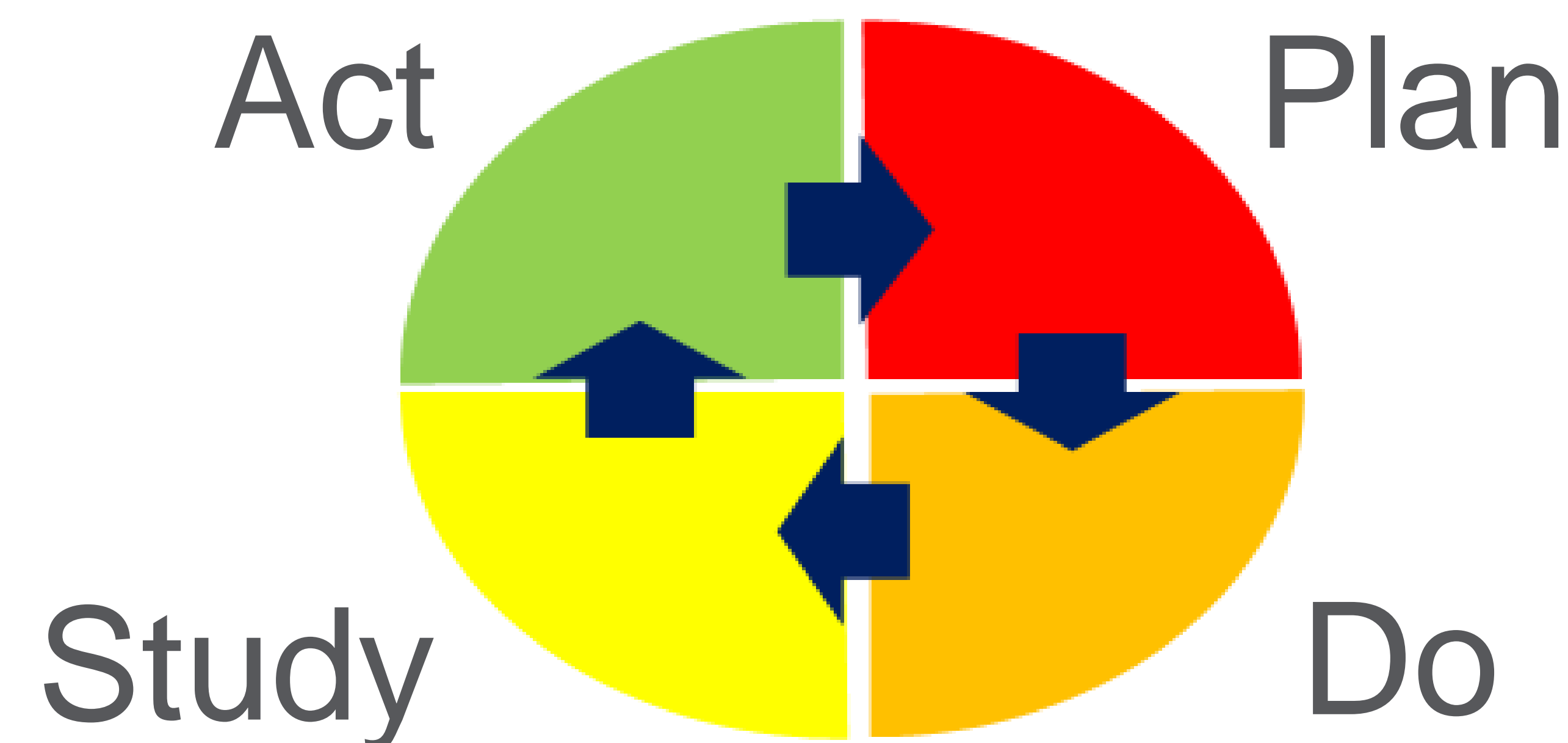
- If people in low socioeconomic status were provided access to resources to safe and routine exercise, then a weight loss trend can be observed.
- To offer weekly exercise classes to Heart of Florida patients to encourage increase in physical activity and weight loss.

## Plan

The target Patient population included Active Heart of Florida patients that were seen by a provider in the last two years who had a BMI above 25, were over age 13, and had no restrictions to physical activity. Exclusion criteria consisted of patients with normal BMI, less than 13 years of age or limitations to physical activity. (patients with BMI less than 25 were allowed to participate but in activity but would not be part of study). Weekly Dance classes were held at Heart of Florida Central lobby area on Wednesdays 6 pm to 6:30pm. Patients were recruited using Flyers placed in each patient room and on bulletin board in lobby. Email and text message sent to every active patient once prior to pilot class. Data collection: Obtain weight at initial class for baseline and monthly after that.

## Do

One patient showed up once for the first class.



## Study

Cycle 1 of our Quality Improvement project did not provide the results that were predicted. Several limitations and barriers were identified throughout the course of the project. Many of these barriers cannot be addressed as patients from low socioeconomic population often have other responsibilities that are perceived to be more important than a leisure participation in exercise classes. A multi-perspective study performed using interviews and surveys from older adults in low socioeconomic class and their trainers/providers offer suggestions to increase physical activity in that population. The study concludes, "to increase acceptability of physical activity for older adults in low SES areas, providers should address the lack of personal perceived value felt".<sup>3</sup> In other words, they want to feel like they are just as valuable and that providers should be considerate of their limitations when offering resources for physical activity.

## Act

The original objective of improving weight loss could not be measured to do lack of participation. Several factors were identified as targets to improve the limited outcome.

1. The project was only set up for a short period of time for project due to resident limitations in duty hour and clinical restriction.
2. Flyers were only placed at Heart of Florida Central. (as opposed to multiple clinics throughout the county)
3. Email and text were only sent once in the beginning
4. Location of class: some patients live far away.
5. Type of class: Dance does not appeal to all people.



## References

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