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Et al.

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INTRODUCTION

• Obesity remains a persistent public health and health disparity concern in the United States and eliminating health disparities, particularly among racial/ethnic minority groups, is a major health priority in the US.

• The NIH Revitalization Act and Federal Law in 1993 required that racial/ethnic minority groups be included in human subject research studies as appropriate for the proposed goals and aims of the study. Despite this effort for inclusion, underrepresentation of minorities in research has been documented.

• Recent examinations of racial/ethnic representation in behavioral weight loss trials are lacking. Describing racial/ethnic minority inclusion in contemporary behavioral weight loss studies is critical to our understanding of the relevance of current weight loss research to diverse populations, particularly those who disproportionately experience high burdens of obesity.

STUDY AIMS

• The primary aim of this review was to evaluate representation of racial/ethnic sub-group members in behavioral weight loss interventions conducted among adults in the United States.

• The secondary aims were to assess recruitment and study design approaches to include racial/ethnic groups and the extent of racial/ethnic sub-group analyses conducted in these studies.

FLOW CHART

RESULTS

Boxplots of distributions of racial/ethnic categories among behavioral weight loss interventions in the United States 2009-2015 (n=87).

• The majority of the 87 studies included a majority of White participants compared to any other racial/ethnic group.

• The racial/ethnic categories used to describe the sample varied. The number of categories ranged from a single racial/ethnic group to six different groups.

• The “other” racial/ethnic category was used in a total of 62 of the 87 studies.

• Thirty-six of the 87 studies (41.4%) reported an intention to recruit a diverse sample and/or described targeted recruitment approaches.

CONCLUSIONS

• Lack of adequate representation of racial and ethnic minority populations in behavioral trials limits the generalizability and potential public health impact of these interventions to groups that might most benefit from weight loss.

• Given racial/ethnic disparities in obesity rates and the burden of obesity and obesity-related diseases among minority groups in the United States, greater inclusion in weight loss intervention studies is warranted.