



The HealthTech Update

May 4, 2020

Spotlight on:
Jacob Kariuki, PhD, AGNP-BC



Jacob Kariuki is an Assistant Professor of Health & Community Systems at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing. His research focuses on reducing the risk of cardiometabolic diseases by helping underserved populations increase their physical activity using web-based interventions.

Below is a preview of our interview with Dr. Kariuki, and click [HERE](#) to learn more about his work!

CBHST: Can you tell me about your current research on a web-based intervention to help people in underserved communities increase their physical activity?

After studying risk scoring instruments, I began to wonder what we should do with people who are identified as being at high risk for cardiovascular disease in underserved and minority communities. I focused on physical activity, because it is one of the most straightforward, common sense things that you can do to improve your health. I began to conduct focus groups with African Americans from underserved neighborhoods who reported low levels of physical activity. Interestingly, they said that one of their main challenges with exercising is that they don't see people who look like them in regards to body shape and fitness status engaging in physical activity. They also felt out of place when they visited gyms or structured exercise classes due to body image concerns. Some lived in neighborhoods that aren't walkable and tended to have inflexible schedules due to hourly jobs or single parenting. All of this made us want to create an online program with workout videos that featured individuals with diverse body shapes, age, and fitness levels exercising.

[Full Interview](#)

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