Dr. Rodney Joseph is a behavioral scientist with a program of research focused on the development of behavioral interventions to promote physical activity and reduce cardiometabolic disease risk among minority women. He joined ASU in 2013 as a T32 postdoctoral fellow under the mentorship of Dr. Colleen Keller, and is currently an Assistant Professor in ASU’s College of Nursing and Health Innovation.

Please describe your research project

Dr. Joseph: My current project, titled “Smart Health,” involves testing the health effects of two different smartphone-delivered health promotion programs. One program one program focuses on overall health and wellness and the other focuses on increasing physical activity. The overall health and wellness program provides participants with health information on a variety of topics and positive health behaviors. Topics covered for this program include: sun protection and skin care, PAP smears and cervical cancer, mammogram screenings, oral health, and stress management. The physical activity program focuses focus exclusively on the health benefits of physical activity and encourages participants to increase their daily activity. Both study apps have been developed with extensive formative research from local community members and are available for both iOS and Android devices. The overall goals of the study are to examine the feasibility of using the smartphone applications to deliver the health promotion programs and to compare the health effects of each program. This study is an extension of research conducted over the past 5 years here at ASU and is funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NIH).

Why is there a community need for this research?

Dr. Joseph: African American women share a higher burden of a variety of health conditions when compared to women of other race and ethnicities, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, and cardiovascular disease. Health behaviors play a major role in the development of these conditions. Thus, if we can encourage women to adopt health-enhancing behaviors, the opportunity exists to reduce several health disparities affecting African American women.

How many participants will partake in this project and what types of activities will they be asked to complete?

Dr. Joseph: We are recruiting 60 African American women for this phase of the study. The intervention is relatively low touch, participants will complete a baseline assessment and then receive their condition specific health promotion intervention for a 4-month period. After this 4-month period, participants will complete another assessment and then a final assessment at 8-months.

How does this research fit with the CHPDP’s mission?

Dr. Joseph: This line of research is community-focused and the intervention has been developed with extensive feedback and information provided by local women here in the Phoenix area. The research team is truly transdisciplinary and includes expertise in health behavior change, cultural tailoring, physical activity promotion and measurement, exercise physiology, and software and smartphone app development.

Who should someone contact if they have interest in participating or would like additional information?

Dr. Joseph: Those interested in participating can email our team at smarthealth@asu.edu or by calling (602)496-0758.

For more information about this project, click here.