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The Association of Extracurricular Activity Participation with Substance Use Among Youth in the DARE Plus Project

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The Minnesota Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) Plus project augmented the DATE curriculum with community, parent involvement, and extracurricular activity components. Of the 24 schools in the DARE Plus project, the 8 receiving the DATE Plus intervention are examined in this study. The association of participation in the extracurricular activities component of the DARE Plus project with adolescent substance use is investigated. The intervention targeted the class of 2005 from seventh to eighth grade (1999-2001). As part of the intervention, students participated in extracurricular activities planned by peer leaders, and annual surveys measured substance use and psychosocial outcomes. After 2 years students overall and boys participating in extracurricular activities had significantly less alcohol use and fewer intentions to use alcohol than did nonparticipants. Asian American participants had significantly less tobacco use and fewer intentions to use tobacco compared with nonparticipants. The results suggest an association between extracurricular activity participation in DARE Plus and lower rates of substance use, especially among boys, and suggest that such participation can be helpful for youth of varying ethnicities. Further research is needed to more rigorously evaluate this association using an experimental design.

Sustained Reduction in Adolescent Pregnancy Rates Through School and Community-Based Education, 1982-2000

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The resident population of Bamberg County, SC, has been exposed to multiples of public health information and education interventions since October 1982 with the intent to reduce the occurrence of unintended pregnancies among unmarried adolescents. Data analyses were conducted to compare 20 years of pregnancy rates among girls aged 14-17 years for Bamberg County, the original three comparison counties, and the rates for the state of South Carolina from 1981-2000. Bamberg County had 3 consecutive years statistically higher than the state and the three comparison counties from 1981-1983, but never thereafter. When regressing pregnancy rates on the passage of time since 1980, the state of South Carolina and Bamberg County, and Williamsburg County showed statistically significant declining slopes to their trend lines, whereas Lee and Clarendon Counties did not show any significant trend whatsoever. This data analysis documents the sustained reduction of adolescent pregnancies in Bamberg County among girls aged 14-17 years during the time period from 1981-2000, which are most likely attributable to the continued presence of the School/Community Program from October 1982 to the present time. Sustainability of the program is attributed to community readiness for such a program, adequate funding, staff stability, competent leadership, comprehensive program planning, policy changes, and implementation of theory-based "best-practices" interventions.

Proper Hand-Washing Techniques in Public Restrooms: Differences in Gender, Race, Signage, and Time of Day

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The purpose of this study was to evaluate hand washing behaviors in public restrooms with and without reminder signs. Gender, race, signage, and time of day were examined to determine if there were differences in hand washing compliance based on these variables. Participants included male and female adults entering restrooms at two public shopping malls in a Midwestern city. The total number of observations made was 599. Of those observed, full hand washing compliance (based on CDC guidelines) was accomplished by 190 (31.7%) individuals. Sixty-eight percent either did not wash their hands or washed them in a less effective way. Significant differences were noted in hand washing compliance based on gender and race. Females and non-Caucasians were more likely to wash their hands than were males and Caucasians. No significant differences in hand washing were noted based on signage or time of day.

The Intuitive Eating Scale: Development and Preliminary Validation

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This article describes the development and validation of an instrument designed to measure the concept of intuitive eating. The ensure face and content validity for items used in the Likert-type Intuitive Eating Scale (IES), content domain was clearly specified and a panel of experts assessed the validity of each item. Based on responses from 391 university students in the United States, the IES was evaluated for internal consistency and reliability using cross-tabulations, factor analysis, test-retest correlation coefficients, and logistic regression techniques. The factor solution isolated four factors that replicated scale construction, including intrinsic eating, extrinsic eating, antidiating, and self-care with alpha coefficients ranging from .42 to .93. Retesting after 4 weeks (N=285) yielded correlation coefficients that ranged between .56 and .87. The presence of theorized relationships between IES scores and certain demographic and lifestyle variables (obesity, presence of an eating disorder, gender, and restrictive dieting) adds support for concurrent validity. IES subscales also correlated significantly with the Cognitive Behavioral Dieting Scale in predicted directions, suggesting convergent validity. Findings provide tentative support for the use of the IES in identifying intuitive eating attitudes and behaviors among college populations. Implications for practice, theory, and future research are discussed.