Environmental Health Needs Assessment Among Parks and Recreation Professionals

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Parks and recreation professionals encounter various environmental health issues in the course of their work, in both outdoor and indoor settings. Examples of potential exposure include: vector-borne disease, skin disease, sun, swimming pool chemicals, indoor air quality such as asthma and carbon monoxide, and injury prevention issues. Because these professionals often lead groups and have opportunities to interact with the public, it is important to ascertain the environmental health awareness among these professionals to determine if they would benefit from environmental health education materials. This study used a questionnaire format to assess environmental health knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Specifically, what do these professionals understand about environmental health issues? And how do they perceive their professional role professionals in addressing some of these issues? Following approval by Internal Review Board, members of the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association will be solicited to participate in an online survey. Approximately 70 environmental health knowledge, attitude, and behavior questions related to issues that parks and recreation professionals are likely to encounter will be administered through surveygizmo.com, and will be analyzed using SPSS version 17.0. Results and data obtained from this study will serve to generate a needs assessment to determine any area(s) of environmental health education that could use additional attention. By understanding the knowledge and attitudes of parks and recreation professionals about environmental health topics, appropriate methods of dissemination can be developed to ensure relevant information is gained and interventions or correct practices can be established. Learning objectives: By the end of this presentation, participants should be able to: 1) Identify areas of environmental health education that are applicable to Parks and Recreation professionals; and 2) List the environmental health diseases that Parks and Recreation professionals tend to encounter.