

**July/August 2005**

**Liars, Cheaters, and Thieves: Correlates of Undesirable Character Behaviors in Adolescents**

R. Mark Kelley, Michael Young, George Denny, and Carri Lewis

Many commentators have indicated that our nation is in a crisis of character. This study examined the relationship between cheating and lying behaviors and constructs previous research has shown to be associated with health behaviors. Participants in the study were 700 students in grades 6-12 from a single southern school district. The questionnaire included items dealing with health and character issues, self-esteem, educational expectations/life goals, self-efficacy scale, and religious beliefs. Results indicated that substantial numbers of students had participated in the following undesirable behaviors in the last year: told lies to stay out of trouble (83.95%), told lies to keep someone else from getting in trouble (70.68%), cheated on an examination in school (47.54%), stole one or more items from stores (17.29%), and stole items from an individual (24.51%). Those who thought these behaviors were wrong were significantly less likely to have engaged in these behaviors. A variety of negative behaviors were related to religious feelings, religious behaviors and educational expectations. Logistic regression results indicated that, of the self-esteem subscales, school self-esteem made the most consistent contribution to distinguishing between students who had engaged in lying, cheating, or stealing and those who had not engaged in these behaviors. Results indicate a high rate of occurrence of some of these undesirable behaviors, highlight the relationship of the home, school, peers, and religion to these behaviors, and have implications for the development of intervention programming.

**Power Analysis in Survey Research: Importance and Use for Health Educators**

James H. Price, Joseph A. Dake, Judy Murnan, Jaime Dimmig, and Sutoidem Akpanudo This article has three purposes: to explain the two different uses of power analysis that can be used in health education research; to examine the extent to which power analysis is being used in published health education research; and to explain the implications of not using power analysis in research studies. Articles in seven leading health education journals (American Journal of Health Behavior, American Journal of Health Education, American Journal of Health Promotion, Health Education & Behavior, Health Education Research, Journal of American College Health, and Journal of School Health) were analyzed for the years 2000-2003. For four of the seven journals, less than 5% of their research articles reported a power analysis. Only two journals (American Journal of Health Behavior and Health Education Research) had a modest number of research articles (14-35%) that reported power analysis. This is the first reported examination of power analysis in health education journals. The findings indicate a potential problem with the quality of health education research being reported.

**Health Education and Behavior: Are School Health Educators in Denial?**

Joseph F. Governali, Bonni C. Hodges, and Donna M. Videto

School health education has been and still is guided by a number of different and often competing philosophical orientations. The field seems to be moving toward a skills-based philosophy, but the adoption of this approach is taking place with little discussion or analysis in the professional health education literature. The purpose of this article is to propose an integrated behavioral alternative to the present skills-based trend and to encourage the health education profession to examine school

health education philosophy critically. The nature and scope of the educational reform that is sweeping the country makes the need for a critical examination of school health education philosophy, with accompanying dialog about goals and purposes, crucial to the growth and viability of school health education.

"...it is suggested that health education be concerned with cognitive development while leaving attitudinal development and behaviors to other institutions in our society." 1 "Although in the long run health education must contribute to people's health...its specific goal is to improve people's health behaviour and the measure of effectiveness is to be sought in changes of behaviour..."2 "I propose that health education be considered a process in which the goal is to free people so that they may make health-related decisions based upon their needs and interests as long as these decisions do not adversely affect others."3 "Health literacy requires educators to switch from a content-driven to a skills-driven approach. Young people need to learn, practice and apply skills successfully, numerous times, with positive reinforcement and social support to maintain personal health and safety."4 "The role of the health educator is to motivate students to put into practice what is learned in class, while at the same time teaching moral responsibility, conscience, and self-discipline."5 "...we should be including not only self-help/self-care, but also the promotion of a healthful environment, a safer work place, a caring medical care system; the promotion of public participation; the development of healthful public policy, a community approach to health status improvement, a caring and sharing philosophy, and not a focus that is overly reliant on individual effort."6

### **Levels and Characteristics of Physical Activity Among a College Student Cohort**

Kim Miller, Ruth R. Staten, Mary Kay Rayens, and Melody Noland

The purpose of this study was to assess physical activity levels and the relationships between activity and personal characteristics among a cohort of college students and to determine personal characteristics that predict activity. A sample of 1,700 undergraduates was mailed a survey that requested demographic information and assessed health behaviors including self-reported physical activity. Of the 1,575 successfully mailed, a total of 903 completed questionnaires were received—a response rate of 57.3%. Nearly half of the respondents indicated they "exercised or participated in sports activities for at least 20 minutes that made you sweat or breathe hard" on three or more of the preceding 7 days (VIG). Nearly three-fifths reported they "walked or biked for at least 30 minutes at a time" on 3 or more of the preceding 7 days (MOD). Those reporting VIG were more likely to be younger Caucasian males. Those reporting MOD were more likely to be younger Caucasian females. Gender, race, being an intercollegiate athlete, and belonging to a fraternity or sorority were predictors of VIG. Gender, age, race, and being an intercollegiate athlete were predictive of MOD. These results are in agreement with other studies on the correlates of physical activity among college students. This study was funded by the University of Kentucky Prevention Research Center.

### **Ambulatory Physical Activity Patterns of College Students**

Timothy K. Behrens and Mary K. Dinger

The purpose of this study was to describe the ambulatory physical activity of a sample of college students. A descriptive, cross-sectional study was conducted in which students (N = 441; males: n = 204, age = 20.20 ± 1.99, BMI = 25.19 ± 4 kg/m<sup>2</sup>; females: n = 237, age = 19.92 ± 1.64, BMI = 22.91 ± 3.2 kg/m<sup>2</sup>) wore an accelerometer, with cycle mode enabled, during all waking hours for 7 consecutive days. The independent variables were day of the week and gender. The dependent variable was steps per day. Two-factor ANOVA, an independent t-test, and chi-squares were calculated. Results indicated that students averaged 11,473.87 ± 2,978.62 steps per day for the week. They were most active on weekdays, and less active on weekends. Mean steps per week, weekday, and weekend did not differ by gender. Further, the majority of the students (67.4%) were exceeding the 10,000 steps per day recommendation. These results can be useful to health educators and researchers seeking a description of ambulatory physical activity in college students.

### **A Qualitative Study about Cervical Cancer Screening Among Latinas Living in a Rural Area of California: Lessons for Health Educators**

Helda Pinzon-Perez, Miguel Perez, Victor Torres, and Vickie Krenz

Cervical cancer is a major health concern for Latinas, who are also less likely to undergo a Pap smear exam than the general population. This study identifies alterable determinants of Pap smear screening for Latino women living in a rural area of California. It involved the design and pilot testing of a culturally appropriate instrument and the development of semi-structured interviews with 51 Latinas. Qualitative data were analyzed using NUD\*IST. Results from this study indicate that the main factors identified by participants as hindering their decision to seek Pap smear exams were long waiting periods, a lack of continuity of care, a perceived lack of quality of care, language differences, and a lack of knowledge regarding how to access the health system. This article provides health educators working in health care settings with an analysis of the cultural and logistic factors influencing health-related decisions in immigrant and rural Latino populations. It also presents some of the lessons that health educators can learn to enhance their professional practice when working with disadvantaged populations.