

November/December 2002

Renewing HIV Prevention Efforts Among Youth

Craig Demmer

It has been 20 years since AIDS was first identified in the United States. Since then, tremendous progress has been made in the prevention and treatment of the disease. This article highlights the need to reinvigorate HIV prevention programs among youth describes an emerging challenge for health practitioners—the belief that safer sex is no longer as important as a result of advances in treatment for HIV. Suggestions are offered to strengthen programs for youth in the third decade of AIDS.

Evaluation of an Internet, Stage-Based Physical Activity Intervention

Ronald L. Hager, Aaron Hardy, Steven G. Aldana, and James D. George This study evaluated the effectiveness of online, stage-based materials on exercise behavior and stage of readiness to change. Participants (n=525) were assigned to a stage-based group, an action-message group, or a control group. Seven-day physical activity, occupational and leisure activity, exercise self-efficacy, and stage of readiness to change were assessed at baseline and 6 weeks. The action-message group demonstrated significant increases in leisure time activity, occupational activity, and daily energy expenditure estimated from a 7-day recall. The stage-based message group demonstrated significant increases in leisure time activity only. All three groups demonstrated small improvements in stage of readiness to change. In a 6-week, online intervention, stage-based messages were less effective than action messages.

Sports Participation and Disordered Eating Behaviors and Beliefs of Middle School Girls

Mardie Burckes-Miller and Lydia J. Burak

The purposes of this study were to examine and describe the disordered eating behaviors and beliefs of middle school female athletes and to determine whether a relationship exists between the number and type of sports participation and disordered eating behavior among the young athletes. Two hundred twenty-six girls in five schools completed surveys that addressed sports participation and behaviors and beliefs related to eating disorders. The students participated in a mean of 4.6 sports, and reported an average of 2.1 weight dissatisfaction beliefs and restrictive or disordered eating behaviors. No relationships were found between the number of sports the girls played and their disordered beliefs and behaviors.

Area Specific Self-Esteem and Sexual Behavior Among Hispanic Middle School Students

Michael Young, George Denny, Joseph Donnelly, Maria Rodriguez, and Mary Hawkins This study examined the relationship between self-esteem and the sexual behavior and intended sexual behavior of Hispanic middle school students. Students in grades 6-8 (n= 1,077) from a predominately Hispanic school district completed a questionnaire designed to elicit information regarding self-esteem, sexual knowledge, attitudes, intended behavior, and behavior. Results for behavior variables were as follows: (1) "sexual intercourse ever"—those who had never participated in sexual intercourse scored

higher on both home and school self-esteem; (2) "sexual intercourse last month"—those who had not participated in sexual intercourse in the last month scored higher on self-esteem; and (3) "intent to have sexual intercourse"—those who scored higher on home and school self-esteem had lower levels of intent to participate in sexual intercourse, those who scored higher on peer self-esteem had higher levels of intent to intend to participate in sexual intercourse. Our results highlight the important positive role of the home and school in influencing sexual behavior of Hispanic adolescents. The results also seem to indicate that for many Hispanic students, sexual experience may be viewed as a means of being accepted by peers.

Preservice Teachers' Beliefs Regarding School Violence Prevention Training

Tina L. Kandakai and Keith A. King

This study was undertaken to answer the following questions: (1) What are preservice teachers' beliefs regarding school violence prevention and intervention approaches? (2) What are preservice teachers' beliefs regarding the effect of violence prevention training on the school environment? (3) Do preservice teachers' beliefs regarding school violence differ based on background and demographic variables (i.e., gender, age, race, education level, area of certification, and student teaching school location [urban vs. suburban vs. rural])? More than 800 undergraduate and graduate students from selected universities across the state of Ohio participated in this study. Data were collected during the 1998/1999 academic year. Significant differences in preservice teachers' beliefs regarding school violence were found based on sex, area of certification, and level of violence prevention training received. This study suggests that violence prevention training should be offered through teacher preparation programs.

Dieting and Nutrition Patterns of College Females: Implications for College Health Educators

Anastasia M. Snelling, Marc Schaeffer, and Sara Lehrhoff

Dieting among college females has been documented, and the national preoccupation with weight and body image continues to concern college health educators. A questionnaire was used to investigate the dieting frequency and nutritional patterns of 215 college females in allied health and health science at a large urban university. Nutritional intake was assessed by the Black Health and Habits History Questionnaire, and body mass index was calculated for each person using self-report height and weight. Seventy-three percent of the total sample reported having dieted at least one time; however, 61% were classified as being at a normal weight. Further, nutritional analysis results indicated that individuals dieting are following recommended nutritional guidelines. Nutrition and dieting recommendations are offered to clinicians and health educators working with college females to promote healthful eating and prevent unnecessary dieting.

Epidemiology, Health Literacy, and Health Education

Mark A. Kaelin and Wendy W. Huebner

Epidemiology, the study of the distribution and the determinants of disease, traditionally is taught in graduate school. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently advocated the integration of epidemiology teaching in grades K-12. The science of

epidemiology offers students a rich arena to practice, experience, and learn the knowledge and skills that constitute health literacy and thus provides a foundation for evidence-based decision making. "Detectives in the Classroom", a curriculum for teaching epidemiology to middle school students, is based on five essential questions, questions that epidemiologists attempt to answer as they do their work, and their enduring understandings.

Bridging the Digital Divide: Internet Literacy Training for Outreach and Lay Health Educators

Nilesh Chatterjee

Existing programs with categorical funding can incorporate the large national goal of eliminating health disparities in their activities. A practical model describing how one such pilot project collaborated with other publicly funded agencies to address deficiencies in information access in an underserved community in Houston, TX, is presented. Workshops provided computer and Internet information-retrieval skills training to enhance the effectiveness of community-based workers and lay health educators engaged in HIV and sexually transmitted disease prevention activities.