

A Transactional Model of Social Support, Self-Efficacy, and Physical Activity of Children in the Child and Adolescent Trial for Cardiovascular Health

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Only a small percentage of the U.S. population engages in regular physical activity. Well-known barriers to physical activity exist, and behavioral models and technologies are needed to overcome them. In the Child and Adolescent Trial for Cardiovascular Health, social cognitive theory (SCT) was used to understand children's physical activity levels. Using the SCT model of reciprocal determinism, it was proposed that positive social support and/or self-efficacy for physical activity in third grade would predict moderate to vigorous physical activity (MVPA) in fifth grade, and that MVPA in fifth grade, in turn, would predict levels of positive social support and self-efficacy for physical activity in seventh grade. Linear regression analyses supported this model when used with a population of 2,698 students of three ethnicities (Caucasian, African-American, and Hispanic) in four diverse geographic sites in the United States. These results contribute support for attitudes influencing behavior, as well as behavior influencing attitudes, providing a wider range of options for interventions aimed at increasing the physical activity levels of children.

Enhancing Student Employability: Perceptions of Faculty Advisors and Community Health Practitioners

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Students seeking advice on the skills and attributes most desired by potential employers of entry-level community health educators usually turn to their faculty advisor for this information. This study examined the skills and characteristics identified by directors of health education in state and local health departments as being most desirable for entry-level health educators and compared those requirements with professional skills and characteristics rated as important by faculty advisors in community health education programs. Survey results indicated community health education students entering the work force today need a wide variety of skills. All skills studied were valued, with the most important of these being writing, public speaking, and presentation skills. Although CHES certification is accepted as a valid measure of basic competence, it is insufficient to gain employment and must be augmented with evidence of other key skills. Faculty advisors should emphasize the need for a wide variety of skills when counseling students. Results from this study also indicated that the advice given by faculty advisors closely follows the current needs of local and state agencies with few exceptions.

Developing Intercultural Competence: An Action Plan for Health Educators

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In today's multicultural society, intercultural competence has become a critical component of the health educator's skill portfolio. This competency is required for understanding ourselves and others from different cultures, managing relationships, developing and implementing programs that match the needs of target audiences, and integrating our insights as educators into larger political and economic institutions. Intercultural competence requires knowledge of culture theory; awareness of the impact of culture on health beliefs, health behaviors, and learning styles; and a willingness to change behavior in ways that promote cultural synergy. Health educators can improve their intercultural competence by studying culture theory; participating in cross-cultural simulations; developing insights into the behavior of individuals and groups experiencing cross-cultural tensions; developing personal strategies for responding to cross-cultural conflicts; expanding opportunities to interact with individuals from other cultures; and keeping an intercultural journal and clipping file. These actions can help health educators develop the type of intercultural skills needed for effective health education within today's multicultural society.

Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases: North Carolina Health Educators' Perceptions of the Health Threats They Pose

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This research assessed the perceptions among health educators working in public health departments of the importance of emerging and reemerging infectious diseases to the health of the public in North Carolina. A mail survey was sent to all health educators working in North Carolina health departments (n = 258) in January 1997. Response rate for the survey was 61.4% (156). Although health educators are aware of the threat posed by the well-known emerging infections (HIV and tuberculosis), the majority reported that they did not know enough about the exotic emerging infections (dengue fever, hanta virus, and cryptosporidium) to make a judgment about the health threats that they pose, or did not believe that the infections posed a current or future threat to North Carolinians. Over 90% of respondents indicated a desire for continuing education focused on infectious diseases. Opportunities for continuing education include one-day workshops, teleconferences, and a regularly updated newsletter on emerging infections. Further research should target the development of specific recommendations for health education activities on emerging infectious diseases and explore ways that health educators can help improve the system of surveillance for infectious diseases.

Health Issues of Gay and Lesbian Youth: Implications for Schools

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Every day in public schools, young gay and lesbian youths must face discrimination manifested in acts of isolation, physical abuse, and denial of basic rights of speech, assembly, and association. This article describes specific concerns and health issues of gay and lesbian youths and the manner in which professionals in college and public school settings can address these issues through an integrated curricular effort. Guidelines for successful programs are suggested, and varied resources are provided.

Creating Tobacco-Free Environments in Clinicians' Offices: Do Patients Notice?

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This study sought to determine whether patients think their orthodontist's office is an appropriate place for antitobacco materials, whether they attend to the antitobacco materials present in the office, and which types of antitobacco materials are most popular. The study was conducted as part of a clinician-initiated tobacco prevention trial involving 154 orthodontists in Southern California. Data were collected from antitobacco order forms and from 602 adolescent patients chosen at random from the last 55 offices to receive the follow-up interview. Approximately 91% of the adolescents thought that an orthodontist's office was an appropriate place for anti tobacco materials and more than 50% remembered seeing many of these materials in their orthodontist's office. The antitobacco materials combat the protobacco messages portrayed in office magazine advertisements, and the presence of these materials can act as a catalyst for discussions about tobacco with the orthodontist. Use of antitobacco materials in orthodontic offices may contribute to tobacco control and prevention.

Promoting Better Home Care of Young Children With Diarrhea Through Workshops at Preschool and Daycare Settings

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Diarrhea is a common and sometimes deadly illness of young children. Proper early care by parents can prevent serious complications. Recommended approaches to fluid replacement and feeding during diarrhea are not widely practiced, however. More education of parents is needed. The present study evaluated the feasibility and effectiveness of an educational intervention designed to reach parents through early childhood settings. Daycare and preschool facilities in Wilcox County, Ala., were receptive to in-service training for parents, teachers, and staff on how to care for young children with diarrhea. A knowledge pretest confirmed that recommendations for the early care of diarrhea were largely unfamiliar and not routinely practiced. Knowledge levels increased substantially after a practical workshop that can be easily replicated. Among participants who completed knowledge tests before and after the workshop, the median test score increased from 32 to 84%. Distribution of information packets by daycare and preschool staff

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may be an effective way to disseminate information on diarrhea care to parents unable to attend the workshop.