

**May-June 2004**

**Ranking of Doctoral Programs of Health Education: Methodological Revisions and Results**

Don Chaney, James M. Eddy, Thomas W. O'Rourke

The purpose of this study is to replicate the Notaro, O'Rourke, & Eddy (2000) study to rank doctoral programs in health education, incorporating comments from professionals in health education to enhance the ranking study methods. This study utilized a multiple set of variables weighted by scholars and leaders in the field of health education. These variables include articles published, journal editorships, external funding of research, student activity, student/faculty ratio, mentoring and placement of doctoral students, and student support. Twenty-four of the 39 doctoral programs in health education participated in this study. Seventeen programs had at least one variable ranked in the top 10, and all but one program had at least two variables ranked in the top 20. Correlation analysis of the seven variables provided additional insights. As in the Notaro, O'Rourke, and Eddy (2000) study, the faculty variables were not statistically significantly related to the student variables. Consistent with the literature, programs with a larger number of faculty tended to have a higher ranking than programs with a smaller number of faculty. Implications of the ranking for administrators, faculty, students, and the health education profession are discussed.

**Analysis of an American Cancer Society's Generation Fit Project**

Michael Peterson, Steve Goodwin, Deborah Ellenberg

This study examined the impact of the American Cancer Society's (ACS) media based peer education program "Message Magic: Selling Healthy Eating and Physical Activity" on participant self-reported dietary and physical activity behaviors, and advocacy skill development. High school students participating in the program were required to work as a team to examine advertising techniques and then develop a media based message to be presented to peers. Results indicated that significant nutritional improvements in females and physical activity improvements in males were realized. The majority (76%) of participants expressed that their media messages had made a positive difference in their school, and the program enhanced their advocacy skills. Students rated their experience in the program favorably. Findings suggest the ACS media-based program may be a viable option for a high school health curriculum.

**Using the Anger Response Inventory to Evaluate the Effect of Shame and Guilt on Interpersonal Communication Skills**

Kristin Wiginton, Deborah J. Rhea, Jody Oomen

Promoting the development of positive interpersonal communication skills has been identified as one of the National Health Education Standards. The propensity to feel shame has been linked to ineffective conflict resolution and is a key component in the development of certain destructive behavioral patterns. This study sought to determine the differences between shame proneness and guilt proneness on measures of constructive and maladaptive responses to anger among a population of students at two large universities. The results of this study indicated that shame proneness was positively correlated with anger arousal, whereas there was no correlation between guilt proneness

and anger arousal. Additionally, shame prone individuals were more likely to select maladaptive, nonconstructive interpersonal responses to anger-eliciting scenarios, while guilt prone individuals were more likely to choose adaptive, constructive responses. Although shame proneness has been identified as a factor in several destructive behavioral patterns, the core issue is the effect of shame on a person's ability to effectively communicate in interpersonal relationships. A discussion of shame and related skill development could be incorporated into existing interpersonal communication teaching strategies.

### **Reducing Sub-Clinical Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression: A Comparison of Two College Courses**

Stephen Brown, Glenn R. Schiraldi

Mental health has been declining among college students in recent years. Reports indicate that even sub-clinical symptoms of anxiety and depression can negatively influence life satisfaction and performance. Mental health experts are calling for more efforts to address these concerns among college and general populations. This study examined the effect of two, 15-week courses for reducing anxiety and depression symptoms in functional college students. Twenty-seven participants in a mental health skills course practiced cognitive-behavioral, relaxation, and lifestyle skills. Eighty-six participants in a conventional, stress management course were taught stress theory and practiced relaxation and lifestyle skills. The Spielberg Trait Anxiety Inventory and the Beck Depression Inventory II were used to assess the students' mental health before and after the intervention. An ANCOVA at posttest revealed significantly greater reductions in anxiety and depressive symptoms among participants in the mental health skills course. Success with the cognitive-behavioral approach used in the course lends support for the recommendation that educators be trained to adapt some of these skills to classroom settings. Additional research is needed to isolate the most powerful components of the course.

### **Department Chairs' Perceptions and Use of Externally Funded Graduate Assistantships**

Jamal I. Bittar, James H. Price, Susan K. Telljohann

This survey explored the perceptions and use of externally funded graduate assistantships by chairpersons of graduate health education programs. A majority had used outside funded graduate assistantships (59%), perceived them to be of the same quality (69%), and identified them as having the same level of funding (53%) as internally funded department assistantships. The majority (65%) would recommend them to other chairpersons. Problems associated with external assistantships use were: trouble to administer (92.6%), stipends not sufficient (19.2%), too much time expected of the students (19.2%), agency and university calendars conflicted (19.2%), and work schedules interfered with class schedules (19.2%).