Presidential Scholars
Prevention Group

Health Knowledge in College

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Barriers of Project
Recruitment and attendance
Busy schedules
Losing participant’s focus during the presentation
Making survey questions non-ambiguous

Introduction
The rate of skin cancer continues to rise. The aim of this paper’s study was to identify the current knowledge and awareness of and attitudes toward the avoidance of skin cancer among a variety of patient groups. The authors concluded that sun-awareness programs should target younger age groups (9). The number of smokers continues to increase, despite the multiple studies that show the dangers of this practice. This study demonstrated how military smoking-cessation efforts may provide valuable lessons for the college community.

Methods
• Designed a PowerPoint presentation with 5 main discussion topics:
  - Sun Exposure
  - Obesity
  - Binge Drinking
  - Smoking
  - STIs
• Designed a 25-item true/false survey for students to fill out before and after presentation (shown on the left)
• Recruited students from the Citadel and College of Charleston to participate in lecture and survey.
• Presentation lasted approximately 45 minutes, total time with pre- and post-surveys was 60 minutes.
• 96 students attended The Citadel presentation.
• Due to schedule conflicts no students attended the College of Charleston presentation.

Results
• Combined improvement between pre- and post-survey showed no significant improvement. A significant improvement was seen in the smoking category (C# square test, P = 0.0361).
• Each topic contained questions that were answered correctly by less than 70% of the participants. This indicates a general lack of well-rounded health knowledge in the college community.

Discussion
We recommend that preventative health education be further incorporated into colleges by using college peers to disseminate the information, along with alternatives to any “unhealthy” activities. The rationale behind this recommendation is that the CDC’s statistics stress the importance of prevention and health awareness. As college of the first time that many young adults are living independently, exposed to a broad array of choices, we believe this is a good age group to target. Due to the limited population in this project, we cannot directly conclude which health knowledge topics are the weakest in the college population.

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References
3. Distribute a follow-up survey (1 month post presentation) to determine the short-term success of the presentation.
4. Recommendations for future study / Presidential Scholars:
• Do Charleston area college students have an in-depth understanding of preventative health behavior?
• Is an interactive presentation by peers an effective delivery method for educating college students?

Future Continuation of Project
Prevention is the key to avoiding many life-threatening or chronic diseases. In cases where the disease cannot be prevented, early detection leads to better prognosis. This project could lead to valuable education, and is thus worth continuing. Measures which would make future “health knowledge for college” presentations more successful:
1. IRB approval from the targeted colleges while obtaining MUSC IRB approval to avoid unnecessary delays.
2. Design surveys with clear questions and integrate survey questions into the presentation.
3. Distribute a follow-up survey (1 month post presentation) to determine the short-term success of the presentation, as well as the immediate success with the post-survey directly after the presentation.
4. Invite feedback from participants.

Lessons Learned
Our group’s success is attributed to impeccable leadership and cooperation on behalf of each student. With different schedules and rapidly approaching deadlines, effective communication among group members was of the utmost importance. In regard to the actual research process, we can extract two very valuable lessons from the project: understanding and navigating the IRB process and conducting research on a limited budget. As banal as food and other incentives may seem, we can safely assume more participation at the College of Charleston if incentives were provided.

Tanning Beds (Sun exposure)
People who use a tanning salon before age 35 increase their risk of melanoma by 75%, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2). Nationwide, the highest rates of indoor tanning were among white women aged 18–21 years (31.8%) and 22–25 years (29.6%). Among white adults who reported indoor tanning, 57.7% of women and 40.0% of men reported indoor tanning ≥10 times in the past 12 months. This clearly indicates a need for continued public health efforts to identify and implement effective strategies for reducing indoor tanning among adults in the United States, particularly among whites, women, and adults aged 18–25 years.

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3. Distribute a follow-up survey (1 month post presentation) to determine the short-term success of the presentation, as well as the immediate success with the post-survey directly after the presentation.
4. Make subject material appealing

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