

Young adults physical activity behavior and chronic disease prevention knowledge across Appalachia

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BACKGROUND

College is a time of independence for young adults as well as the independence to decide on food choices, lifestyle behaviors, and social groups. Many health conditions fall in line with this time period including risk of chronic disease. Because of this, the knowledge of chronic disease prevention is important to understand and it's relationship with physical activity as a potential preventative measures.

Specifically, the Appalachian region of the United States is known for it poor health. The entirety of West Virginia, along with sections of New York, Kentucky, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama are encompassed in this region.



OBJECTIVE

This research aims to identify the Chronic Disease prevention Knowledge of students at eight U.S. universities along with their physical activity habits. Identifying if those students who are more physically active also have higher chronic disease prevention knowledge. These analyses will also be looked at when comparing Appalachian status of students.

METHODS

N = 1115
 18-24 year olds from 8 universities
 Frequencies were provided for individuals in low, medium, high CDK, and level of physical activity. Both Appalachian and non-Appalachian participants were divided.

- Behavioral Questionnaire:
- Chronic disease prevention knowledge (N = 5 questions; CDK)
 - Appalachian Status (N = 1 questions)
 - Physical Activity (N = 6 questions, International Physical Activity Questionnaire; IPAQ)

RESULTS

- Appalachian:**
- Non-Hispanic, white (76.2%)
 - High physical activity (52.8%)
 - Low nutritional CDK (52.5%)
 - Moderate Diet/Cancer risk CDK (54.1%)
- Non-Appalachian:**
- Non-Hispanic, white (52.3%)
 - High physical activity (50.7%)
 - Low nutritional CDK (54.5%)
 - Moderate Diet/Cancer risk CDK (57.9%)

Appalachian dwellers tend to fall within higher risks of chronic diseases as compared to the nation as a whole. In our college student population, those identifying as being from the Appalachian region, had very similar behaviors and knowledge as those that were non-Appalachian

Variable	Appalachian	Non-Appalachian
Race/Ethnicity		
Non-Hispanic White	99 (76.2%)	483 (52.3%)
Non-Hispanic Black	9 (6.9%)	106 (11.5%)
Other (including bi-racial)	22 (16.9%)	327 (35.4%)
Hispanic/Latino	0 (0%)	7 (.76%)
Physical Activity		
Low	8 (6.4%)	50 (5.47%)
Moderate	51 (40.8%)	401 (43.9%)
High	66 (52.8%)	463 (50.7%)
CDK – Fat and Fiber of Foods		
Low	52 (52.5%)	386 (54.5%)
Moderate	32 (32.3%)	201 (28.4%)
High	15 (15.2%)	121 (17.1%)
CDK – Beliefs of Diet and Cancer Risk		
Low	15 (15.3%)	118 (17.0%)
Moderate	53 (54.1%)	402 (57.9%)
High	30 (30.6%)	174 (25.1%)

CONCLUSION

Across both Appalachian and non-Appalachian status, young adults from the eight universities are reported as being very active but have low knowledge of fat and fiber in foods for a prevention measure and moderate knowledge and beliefs of how diet impacts cancer risk. Further exploration is needed in the education of young adults on prevention of diet and chronic diseases.