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 its relationship with physical activity as a potential preventative measure.

Specifically, the Appalachian region of the United States is known for its 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 question)
- 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.

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.

Support or Funding Information

Approval to use the data set was granted by the University of Tennessee Institutional Review Board prior to study implementation. This material is based upon work that is supported by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under award number 2014-67001-21851.