

Community-based Research Education in Eastern Kentucky



CREEK Mission

The mission of CREEK is to build the capacity of rural peoples and communities to overcome individual and structural barriers to attaining individual and community health and wellness. The mission is accomplished through education of rural community-based researchers and dissemination of research results to communities and others.



A Pilot Study of Parental Knowledge and Attitudes toward HPV and HPV Vaccine in an Appalachian Kentucky County

Angela W. Mitchell, Gretchen Ely & David Royse

Purpose: To identify knowledge and attitudinal barriers to parental intention to vaccinate adolescent girls against Human Papillomavirus (HPV) infection.

Method: The authors developed a 31-item survey of parental knowledge of HPV risks (e.g., association with cervical cancer), their attitudes toward voluntary and required immunization, and their intention to immunize their own children. Surveys were designed with input from community members and distributed through a rural County Health Department, beginning in late February, 2008. Data collection will continue until April 1, 2008 or until 100 surveys are completed.

Results: Data will be summarized using descriptive statistics. In addition, parental knowledge, beliefs and attitudes will be used in multiple regression equations to assess whether these variables are associated with parental intentions to immunize their daughters with the HPV vaccine. Qualitative responses will be analyzed for themes that suggest follow up studies.

Conclusion: Conclusions can be drawn after data are collected and analyzed. The authors designed this study to provide useful information to Kentucky's healthcare providers and policymakers as they address knowledge and attitudinal issues related to HPV and HPV vaccine. Results can be applied to educational practices and prevention efforts. This study will contribute to prevention of HPV and its associated cervical cancer morbidity and mortality by identifying barriers to parental willingness to vaccinate girls before they initiate sexual activity and become infected.



Social Work Student Attitudes Toward Reproductive Health Issues

L. Shevawn Akers, Gretchen E. Ely, and Lilliane D. Sparkes

Purpose: To explore factors that influence social work student attitudes toward women's reproductive health.

Method: Current undergraduate, graduate and doctoral social work students at the University of Kentucky (n=319, 310 & 36, respectively) were invited to complete an anonymous, online survey related to attitudes toward women's reproductive health. Students enrolled at the main campus in Lexington and at off-campus sites (Northern Ky. U., Morehead State U., Hazard and Prestonsburg Comm. Colleges) were included. The authors designed a 41-item survey of personal and professional attitudes toward such issues as contraception, abortion, the HPV Vaccine and relevant policies. One-hundred and sixteen participants responded to the survey, which was available online for 17 days.

Results: Preliminary results indicate that respondents who self-identified as Appalachian (n=36) held views more consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the NASW Policy Statements on Family Planning and Reproductive Health when compared with their non-Appalachian counterparts (n=78). Additional analyses are underway.

Conclusion: The NASW Code of Ethics requires social workers to respect a client's right to self-determination, including making individual health decisions. The NASW Policy Statement on Family Planning and Reproductive Health indicates that social work as a profession supports clients' rights to choose whether or not to have children, when to have them and how many to have via access to family planning services including abortion. This study explores social work students' attitudes toward reproductive health and the NASW Code of Ethics and Policy Statements. The results of this study are valuable to the social work profession to assist the profession in understanding what factors may influence professional attitudes toward women's reproductive health issues and how these attitudes affect services to clients.



CREEK: Focus on Students

Cynthia Cole, Shevawn Akers, Jewel Bentley, Elinda Biggs, Frank Bills, Heather Hale, Angela Mitchell, Jerry Ritchie, Lilliane Sparkes, Laura Stephenson, and Jeremy Woodward
University of Kentucky

The CREEK Program dedicates this poster to the memory of Jerry Ritchie, who died on February 5, 2008. Jerry loved the CREEK program and we loved him. He was looking forward eagerly to presenting his first research project at ASA this year. Elinda Biggs will represent Jerry and his study, as both began the program together in 2003 and were devoted CREEK "pioneers."

Food Preferences in Appalachia

Jerry L. Ritchie

Purpose: To explore factors that influence food preferences in eastern Kentucky.

Method: Participants in workshops sponsored by Food and Nutrition Extension Agents in several eastern Kentucky counties were invited to complete anonymous surveys about food preferences before and after participating in a food preparation workshop. The author designed an 11-item survey that evaluated taste, cost, appeal, family preferences, health motivation, family tradition, and resignation related to food choices. A 12th item measured intention to try the recipes at home (the dependent variable). Forty-nine participants completed surveys. A factor analysis was carried out with follow-up regression analyses using factor scores to predict intention to try the recipes at home.

Results: 10 of the 11 items loaded on one of four factors related to food choices (Lifestyle Acceptability, Health Promotion, Prevention of Negative Health Events and Family Tradition). Factor scores (pre-test) were entered into a multiple regression equation to predict intention to prepare the recipes at home (post-test). The model predicted 19% (adj.) of the variation in the dependent variable (p=.01). The sum of the mean scores on post test items (64.86) was slightly higher (more healthful), than the sum of the mean scores on pre test items (64.61), however the difference was not statistically significant. Participants were slightly less willing to prepare recipes at home after they tasted them than before they tasted them.

Conclusion: Results suggest that pre-existing attitudes are associated with post-test intentions to try the workshop recipes. Jerry was fond of saying of his study results, "I showed again that you can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink it." The Food Choices Questionnaire Jerry developed shows promise for use in Appalachian populations. Jerry learned to love healthful food while trying to tame the diabetes that caused his death. He would be very pleased if his life and research helped others in rural Appalachia to improve their food choices.



Health Activism, Participatory Action Research and Cancer Prevention and Control Services in Three Eastern Kentucky Area Development Districts

G. Franklin Bills

Purpose: This paper examined the conceptual basis of health activism as an area of research and how that conceptualization might be applied to cancer prevention and control research in three area development districts in eastern Kentucky. The author assessed how different mobilization potentials in various communities might affect efforts to implement a community-based participatory mapping project designed to support cancer prevention and control efforts in the same area development districts.

Methods: The author distinguished between health activism and health advocacy and outlined the methodologies required to carry out the study. This approach is a refinement of previous methods and starts from a basic conceptualization for doing formative research in rural communities. A variety of methods were used to expand the approach to better address themes that are related to identifying and studying health activism.

Results: The author outlined a basic community assessment approach and proposed a process for making amendments to the method. This approach was designed to clarify the team approach used, define the place of local media in the community, and discuss how to gather and analyze the range of health-related discourses in the communities of interest. Research based upon these conceptualizations and methods will be carried out in two phases. The community assessment will constitute phase I of the research and Phase II is designed to incorporate the assessment data into a participatory community mapping project with local health navigators.

Conclusions: The approach described in this paper synthesizes the work of Zoller, Balshem, Habermas, and a wide variety of others to create a novel approach to studying cancer control in eastern Kentucky. The author proposed that the newly-designed approach would produce results that are more faithful to community meanings and more accurate as a guide to carrying out health promotion activities in the communities studied.



Pathfinders of Perry County was established by the CREEK Clearinghouse and serves as a model of community collaboration to research and promote health behaviors. In this case, walking.



Intention to Walk Among Health Workers in a Rural Appalachian Community

Heather Hale and Jeremy Woodward

Purpose: To identify current activity levels among employees of a rural Appalachian hospital and their intention to increase their physical activity if walking infrastructure improvements were made at their workplace.

Method: In October, 2007, the authors arranged to distribute a 22 item survey with paychecks to 1006 employees of a hospital in eastern Kentucky. Completed surveys were returned by 40 employees within the deadline of 12 days.

Results: Mean BMI of the sample was over 31 (over 30 is classified as obese). Half reported no current activity, 25% reported being active 5 days a week, but 65% reported they would like to be active at least 5 days a week. Respondents reported that sidewalk problems (63%), unsafe drivers (48%) and high speed traffic (43%) were the primary barriers to walking and attractive landscaping (58%) was a support for walking. The majority was more interested in walking for exercise than walking to a destination and 83% said they would walk for exercise if a route were developed around the perimeter of the hospital. Approximately 20% would walk to nearby destinations (5 to 1 mile).

Conclusion: Respondents said they would be likely to increase physical activity if they had access to a safe, attractive walking path around the perimeter of the hospital grounds. This supports the hypothesis that infrastructure improvements would increase physical activity among these workers.

Civic Engagement of Elders: Defining Supports and Challenges of Rural Older Adults' Physical Activity

Laura Stephenson

Purpose: To identify community supports and challenges for older rural adults to maintain a physically active lifestyle.

Methods: Eight older rural adults participated in a community based participatory research project using photovoice, a qualitative approach in which participants use photography to research and give voice to their perspectives on an issue. The older adults identified and photographed supports and challenges for physical activity in their rural community. In 3 group sessions, participants analyzed their pictures and defined themes using the SHOWED technique, which asks:

- 1) What do you **SEE** here?
- 2) What's really **HAPPENING**?
- 3) How does this relate to **OUR** lives?
- 4) **WHY** does this problem or strength exist?
- 5) What can we **DO** about it?

Results: Participants identified two overarching themes: Each person chooses whether to stay active and the community chooses whether to make resources available for active lifestyles through the lifespan. Subcategories included concerns (e.g., apathy, lack of indoor facilities for year-round activity) and opportunities (e.g., local park walking trail, close proximity to state and national parks and forests). Participants designed an issues booklet for local policymakers and community residents to address opportunities for individuals and communities to maintain and support a physically active lifestyle.

Conclusions: The project engaged older adults to identify, analyze, and share their perspectives on physical activity in later years with their community. They concluded that personal choice and community support for staying active were integrally related with staying physically fit in the later years. As one older adult advised his community: "Find what you enjoy and stay active doing that. Don't go home and set on your front porch in a rocking chair. Get out there and get on with your life."



CREEK has received financial support from the National Cancer Institute, Appalachian Cancer Control Network, Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), Good Samaritan Foundation, Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation, and Community Trust Bank.
www.uky.edu/Programs/CREEK/

