



Examining Strategies to Sustain Improved Physical Activity Behaviors and Healthy BMI Outcomes in College Students

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Introduction

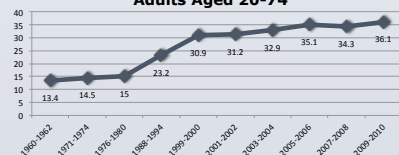
- College students gain weight every year in college, approximately four pounds and this is more than a young adult not attending college
- One-third to one-half of U.S. Undergraduates and California Community College student reference groups were either overweight or obese and only one-half or less were meeting physical activity recommendations in 2013 and 2014
- Barriers to weight management in college include time constraints, prevalence of unhealthful options, academic stress, sedentary activity and negative habits
- College students want help (individual & environmental) with weight management
- Young adults incur challenges in navigating their new developmental stage
- Weight in young adulthood is a strong predictor of weight gain in adulthood
- Physical education requirements are decreasing in post-secondary education
- Physical activity time needs to be protected
- Obesity is epidemic, increasing the risk of chronic disease
- Physical activity can reduce obesity

Background

American Adults Aged 20+

- 1/3 are normal weight (BMI 18.5-24.9)
- 1/3 are overweight (BMI 25-29.9)
- 1/3 plus are obese (BMI ≥ 30)

Prevalence of Obesity Among U.S. Adults Aged 20-74



Age adjusted prevalence of obesity among U.S. adults aged 20-74. Pregnant females excluded. NHES (National Health Examination Survey) and NHANES (National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey) body mass index greater than or equal to 30.0kg/m².

Influences:
1980's - The personal computer
1990's - Supersizing of calorie dense, nutrient poor fast-food
2000's - No Child Left Behind Act

The Detriment of Obesity

Physical in-activity contributes to obesity

Obesity can increase the risk of chronic disease

Chronic disease crowds access, strains quality, increases cost, adds to complexity and impacts quality of life

Conditions Associated with Obesity

- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Respiratory Disorders
- Arthritis
- Reproductive complications
- Premature death and other consequences

Physical Activity Recommendations

Moderate-intensity cardio or aerobic exercise for at least 30 minutes on 5 or more days per week

Or

Vigorous-intensity cardio or aerobic exercise for at least 20 minutes on 3 or more days per week

American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association, 2007

Healthy Campus

The American College Health Association Healthy Campus 2020 Goals

Create social and physical environments that promote good health for all

Attain high-quality lives free of preventable disease, disability or injury and premature death

Achieve health equity, eliminate disparities and improve the health of the entire campus community

Promote quality of life, healthy development and positive health behaviors

More than ever, we need to be concerned with the health of our college students



Theoretical Foundation

Social Cognitive Theory - Albert Bandura

Internal Personal Factors
(Cognitive, affective and biological events)



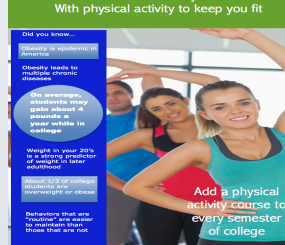
Staying Active Campaign

Provide students with a structured option

Internal Personal Factors
(Cognitive, affective and biological events)



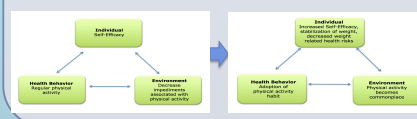
Balance the time you sit
With physical activity to keep you fit



Step 1
Share brief facts about the phenomenon of weight gain in college and the health risks to incoming freshmen during registration

Step 2
Suggest enrolling in a physical activity course of choice every semester of their college career

Step 3
Initial visit and follow-up to Student Health Services to assess risk through history taking and optional physiologic measurements



Positive Effects of Campaign

- Creates a health oriented social environment that can positively influence others
- Weight decrease or maintenance abates obesity and risk for chronic disease
- Registration commitment holds student invested and accountable
- Mitigates the logistics of trying to be active before or after school
- Provides direction to students who may value from the structure
- Opens social networks associated with healthful behavior
- Embeds routine, sustaining health behavior over time
- Allows personal control over health habits
- Secures physical activity 2-3 days a week

Reflection

America is sustaining the results of more than three decades of weight proliferation and will need to intervene through the same channels that created the problem in order to change the problem

U.S. Healthcare is transitioning from a disease model to a health model

Weight gain in college contributes to the obesity epidemic and requires intervention

The college environment is an opportunity to increase awareness and facilitate healthful behaviors

College graduates are well positioned to represent healthful lifestyle practices as "health stewards" to their families, friends, co-workers and communities

What More is Needed?

- Alignment of national public policies and college goals to bring about beneficial changes for campus wellness
- Revisit the core of general education for a "whole student approach"
- Policy change requiring all post-secondary education to increase physical activity requirements
- All colleges and universities should be "Healthy Campuses"
- Subsidy is needed to support health promotion campaigns

References

Available upon request

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