

Summer 2017 Student Research Program

Project Description

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PROJECT TITLE (200 Characters max):

Community-Based Research on Chronic Diseases and Cancer in Essex and Passaic Counties, NJ

HYPOTHESIS:

Evaluation of the outcomes of community-based interventions for comprehensive cancer and chronic disease control, and assessments of the efficacy of tools and methods used to guide those interventions, will improve healthcare utilization and health outcomes.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Include design, methodology, data collection, techniques, data analysis to be employed and evaluation and interpretation methodology)

The Essex-Passaic Wellness Coalition (EPWC), now in its 13th consecutive year of service (including its predecessor, the Essex County Cancer Coalition), is supported in part by the NJ Department of Health (NJDOH), Office of Cancer Control and Prevention (OCCP), and is described on our website: web.njms.rutgers.edu/EPWC. The EPWC helps coordinate a very wide range of activities including community outreach and education as well as other interventions to prevent and reduce risk of chronic disease, especially cancer, throughout the Essex and Passaic County communities, with a focus on medically underserved persons. It is one of New Jersey's ten NJDOH-sanctioned regional chronic disease coalitions (RCDCs).

Our current community endeavors build upon the specific interventions mandated by the OCCP, focusing on current critical issues in communities in Essex and Passaic Counties, and include:

- *Presentation of the "Body and Soul" Research-tested Intervention Program to educate faith-based congregations about better nutrition and physical activity;*
- *Promotion of the American Cancer Society's Colorectal Cancer Screening Toolbox to primary care practices to increase rates of colorectal cancer screening;*
- *Organization and promotion of community-based oral cancer screening;*
- *Two interventions to increase HPV immunization rates, specifically (a) enlistment of primary care practices in programs to improve HPV immunization rates and (b) education of school nurses and parents of school-age children on the importance of HPV immunization;*
- *Implementation of on-site sun safety education and, where feasible, skin cancer screening, in recreational and other locations where sun exposure is prevalent;*
- *Education of municipal governing bodies about ordinances prohibiting smoking and other use of tobacco in outdoor recreation areas;*
- *Surveying retail stores near schools for the presence of tobacco advertising and informing local health departments and municipal governments of the results for them to use in assessing age restriction of tobacco sales;*
- *Assessing use and awareness of cancer survivorship programs among health care providers;*
- *Other chronic disease-related projects.*

The EPWC maintains an online calendar of these and all other chronic disease and cancer-related events in the community. We also participate in a variety of health fairs and related activities, including collaboration with Rutgers School of Dental Medicine in a major annual free oral cancer

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screening day and health fair in the spring that is open to, and widely promoted to, the whole community.

As the only academically affiliated New Jersey RCDC, we frequently seek to help lead the way plus go beyond the basic mandates for RCDCs in general. For each of these activities, we systematically collect data for the purpose of evaluation by various means, such as surveys, direct observation, monitoring of outreach, etc. These data provide a rich field of information for analysis to assess factors of success. Specific techniques and data analyses depend on the particular intervention being assessed, but typically involve statistical analysis of both survey and observational data with stratification to evaluate differential effects in various population subgroups.

Dr. Weiss played a substantial role in the development of New Jersey's first comprehensive cancer control plan and helped oversee and evaluate its deployment statewide. Drs. Weiss and Rosenblum continue in several leadership roles.

Dr. Weiss serves as the Cancer Liaison Physician and Oncology Committee Vice-Chair for the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey at University Hospital. These roles sometimes help complement the EPWC activities detailed above.

Although the original foci of the EPWC emanated from cancer-related issues, its mandate is now quite broad, and virtually any issue related to any chronic disease may be considered. Drs. Weiss and Rosenblum in recent years also led a separate endeavor, the Essex-Hudson Diabetes Resources Coordinating Center. They also led in past years community-based medical skills workshops based on the Stanford Chronic Disease Self-Management model, including the Chronic Disease Self-Management Program and the Diabetes Self-Management Program, enveloped in a comprehensive set of novel evaluation tools related to short- and medium-term efficacy.

We also recently led (2014) a CDC grant-sponsored set of educational symposia about gynecologic cancers with quantitative pre-post evaluations, followed by collaborating the next year (2015) with the NJDOH on a similar statewide gynecologic symposium.

SPONSOR'S MOST RECENT PUBLICATIONS RELEVANT TO THIS RESEARCH:

SH Weiss, DM Rosenblum, BE Biondi. Essex-Passaic Wellness Coalition quarterly progress report. Prepared for and submitted to the NJ Department of Health, Office of Cancer Control and Prevention, January 2017. (This and prior quarterly progress reports provide detailed summaries of the EPWC's activities.) We also routinely prepare annual summaries. Relevant documents can be provided to interested students.

There is considerable detailed information available on the EPWC's web site, web.njms.rutgers.edu/EPWC.

SH Weiss, JY Kim, DM Rosenblum, P Parikh, A Tasslimi. New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control: 2006 Status Report to the Governor and Legislature, From the Task Force on Cancer Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment in New Jersey. Prepared under the auspices of the Task Force Evaluation Committee. <http://web.njms.rutgers.edu/evalcweb/GovStatusReport2006.pdf>.

SH Weiss, DM Rosenblum, JY Kim. New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control: Status Report to the Governor, From the Task Force on Cancer Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment in New Jersey. Prepared under the auspices of the Task Force Evaluation Committee. December 2004. <http://web.njms.rutgers.edu/evalcweb/GovStatusReport2004Abridged.pdf>. (Full version at <http://web.njms.rutgers.edu/evalcweb/GovStatusReport2004Full.pdf>.)

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DM Rosenblum, JB Klotz, JY Kim, SH Weiss. Estimation of Cancer Prevalence — Methods and Uses for Comprehensive Cancer Control Planning. UICC 19th World Cancer Congress. Washington, DC. Abstract No. 8180. 09-Jul-2006.

IS THIS PROJECT SUPPORTED BY EXTRAMURAL FUNDS?

Yes or No

(IF YES, PLEASE SUPPLY THE GRANTING AGENCY'S NAME)

New Jersey Department of Health, Office of Cancer Control and Prevention

THIS PROJECT IS: Clinical Laboratory Behavioral Other (Epidemiologic)

THIS PROJECT IS CANCER-RELATED

Please explain Cancer relevance

Among the interventions engaged in by the EPWC are those to improve colorectal cancer screening, to bring oral cancer screening to community locations, to prevent cervical and other HPV-related cancers by increasing rates of HPV immunization, to prevent melanoma and other skin cancers by sun safety education, and to prevent lung cancer by fostering awareness of the value of restrictions on smoking.

THIS PROJECT IS HEART, LUNG & BLOOD- RELATED

Please explain Heart, Lung, Blood relevance

Interventions to improve nutrition and increase physical activity, as well as interventions to foster awareness of the value of restrictions on smoking, are aimed at reducing the burden of cardiovascular disease.

THIS PROJECT EMPLOYS RADIOISOTOPES

THIS PROJECT INVOLVES THE USE OF ANIMALS

PENDING

APPROVED

IACUC PROTOCOL #

THIS PROJECT INVOLVES THE USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

PENDING

APPROVED

IRB PROTOCOL # Pro20140000373, Pro0120110088,
0120100121, 0120090196, 0120050106, Pro0120100089 (Fatahzadeh, PI)

THIS PROJECT IS SUITABLE FOR:

UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

ENTERING FRESHMAN

SOPHOMORES

ALL STUDENTS

THIS PROJECT IS WORK-STUDY: Yes or No

THIS PROJECT WILL BE POSTED DURING ACADEMIC YEAR

FOR INTERESTED VOLUNTEERS?: Yes or No

WHAT WILL THE STUDENT LEARN FROM THIS EXPERIENCE?

Depending on which aspects of the EPWC's work the student assesses, (s)he will learn some or all of the following.

- *How to design and/or implement community-based interventions concerning chronic disease(s).*
- *How to approach the analysis of datasets, using both descriptive and analytic methods.*
- *How to assess an intervention to improve health care providers' clinical activities.*

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- *How to perform critical and systematic assessment of methodologies, and their practical application.*
- *How to perform systematic hypothesis-directed analyses with the objective of providing guidance for future endeavors.*
- *How critical assessment of findings can lead to changes in approach or implementation.*

USEFUL RELEVANT PRIOR EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

- *Prior experience with data analysis and data analysis software such as MS Excel and SAS.*
- *Excellent written and communication skills.*
- *Prior experience working on a research team and/or a community outreach organization.*
- *Car and driver's license (for projects involving access to community sites).*

Human subjects protection training and certification through the Rutgers-specified CITI course for Social, Behavioral, and Epidemiologic Research Investigators. (See orra.rutgers.edu/citi for details.)