Innovations in Primary Prevention: Emerging Research from CDC's Prevention Research Centers

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A network of community, academic, and public health partnerships make up the Prevention Research Centers (PRCs) funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to address the nation's chronic diseases. The PRCs partner with communities to conduct research that benefits those directly affected (Ammerman, Harris, Brownson, & Tovar-Aguilar, 2011). A number of the PRCs across the United States report the results of their often-times extensive community research in this special issue of *The Journal of Primary Prevention*.

The first four articles describe the impact of specific aspects of physical activity and nutrition on chronic disease. The first article by Kegler et al. sought to determine the reasons that adults living in the rural southern United States engage in less physical activity than their urban counterparts. A common barrier to physical activity among this population was found to be a lack of sidewalks, planned recreational facilities, and streetlights. Among those rural southern inhabitants who were more physically active, their level of activity was achieved using more practical approaches that utilized their environment, such as walking on trails, doing yard work, and gardening. Understanding how physically active people residing in the Rural South are able to maintain a high level of activity can

potentially inform interventions that promote physical activity in this high-risk population. The second article focused on a West Coast group of immigrants of Mexican American/Mexican origin, another population at high risk for obesity and chronic disease, to promote behavior change around obesity. Elder et al. found that engaging the community, actively translating science to practice, and building capacity among various organizations were positive determinants of behavior change in this population. The third article by Ramirez et al. aimed to assess knowledge in an eastern coastal state around the concept that physical activity can reduce cancer risk. The study revealed a correlation between high rates of obesity and lack of knowledge that obesity increases the risk of many cancers. The last article in this group (Sharkey et al.) analyzed the use of *promotoras* in a Hispanic community with health disparities. As trusted agents of the community, *promotoras* were found to be successful agents of health education and nutrition among their own communities.

The next five articles spotlight prevention of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Two of these articles examined human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common STI in the United States. HPV infection is linked to many cancers including cervical, anal, oropharyngeal, and penile cancers, and in the spring of 2012, the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommended that both females and males be vaccinated against HPV (CDC, 2012). The first article by Kornfeld et al. examined knowledge and

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awareness of the HPV vaccine among immigrant Hispanic fathers and their willingness to have their adolescent sons and/or daughters vaccinated. The results of this study could shape interventions targeting this population of parents to increase HPV vaccination rates and decrease cancer risk. The next article by Casey et al. looked at the predictors of acceptance of the first dose of HPV in a group of rural Appalachian young women. An interesting finding of this study was that fathers' acceptance of HPV vaccination was the highest predictor of receiving the first dose in this population; other positive predictors were peer support and recommendation from their healthcare provider.

Crosby et al. used a three-question partner-related index to assess for individuals possibly at high risk for STIs. This index may translate well for use in clinical practice. Investigation by another PRC (Shegog et al.) shows that comparative effectiveness research can be used as a framework to initiate a host of STI and pregnancy prevention programs. The last article focused on the fit and feel of condom use as prevention to STIs. This study by Crosby et al. revealed that men and women used condoms less, secondary to a loss of

pleasure, thus increasing the risk of STIs. This reveals an area for improvement in condom development that could aid in the prevention of STIs and unintended pregnancy.

This special issue of *The Journal of Primary Prevention* is a testament to the innovations in primary prevention research currently occurring in CDC-funded PRCs across the United States. The body of knowledge and science put into practice from this research is improving the health of this nation.

References

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