

The Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

Newsflash

Fall 2018 Issue

The PRC has prepared this electronic *Newsflash* to keep you informed about our work and invite you to take part in our research, education and outreach activities. If you have ideas for working together on shared projects, please let us know.

For more information about the Yale-Griffin PRC:

Please visit our website at <http://www.yalegriffinprc.org>

PRC Updates

Welcome to: Sienna DeMaio, a research volunteer at the PRC. Sienna recently received a bachelor's degree from Villanova University and plans to attend graduate school to further her studies. She is assisting with projects related to our VITAHLS initiative and our online physical activity resource guide.

Current Projects

UPDATE - Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS)

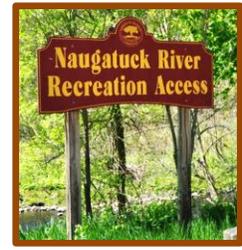
This initiative, led by the PRC and Griffin Hospital in partnership with school and community partners, aims to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain comprehensive school-based programming focusing on nutrition and physical activity for PreK-12 students. Our school partners are the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, Shelton and Naugatuck school districts, and Emmett O'Brien Regional Technical School. For more information, contact VITAHLS Coordinator Kim Doughty (email kim.doughty@yalegriffinprc.org).

- **VITAHLS Evaluation Project:** At the end of the 2017-2018 school year, the PRC surveyed and interviewed administrators and staff in the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, and Shelton school districts. This project combined quantitative surveys and qualitative structured interviews to determine the perceived impact of elements of the VITAHLS initiative among our school partners. The goals are to: (1) assess awareness of VITAHLS, its mission, and programs in participating school districts; (2) determine use of VITAHLS programs in these districts; (3) understand the perceived impact of VITAHLS on the health, culture and practices of these districts; and (4) identify perceived barriers to and facilitators of implementing VITAHLS and other health programs. We are now analyzing survey data and transcribing interviews to assist in preparing reports for the school districts and other partners, including the CDC.

UPDATE – Community Health Opportunities Organized with Schools at the Epicenter (CHOOSE)

Our core research project for this 5-year CDC funding cycle expands within/beyond VITAHLS school districts to include other health promotion “portals” as well in their respective communities.

- **Physical Activity Resource Guide** – With guidance from a working group, the PRC is finalizing the content and the dissemination plans for this guide, which will serve as an online community portal. Our partners include the Naugatuck Valley Health District, the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments (NVCOG), the Naugatuck River Greenway Committee, and the Valley YMCA. This guide will feature low-cost and no-cost resources in the Lower Naugatuck Valley communities of Ansonia, Beacon Falls, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton. It will provide brief descriptions of selected resources and where to find them on a map, as well as links to their websites. Users will be able to search based on activity category for places to walk, run, hike, bike, swim, paddle a canoe or kayak, play ball sports, or enjoy winter sports such as ice skating or cross-country skiing. The guide will also feature playgrounds, open fields, state parks, nature centers, parks & recreation departments, and senior centers. The NVCOG has expertise in geographic information systems (GIS) mapping, and is contributing in-kind staffing to help create and host the online portal with the physical activity resource information and maps. For more information, contact Judy Treu (email judy.treu@yalegriffinprc.org).



NEW STUDY - Prevalence and Patterns of Marijuana Use among Patients Diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis

The PRC is partnering with Joseph Guarnaccia, MD of the Multiple Sclerosis Treatment Center (MSTC) at Griffin Hospital on this study, funded by the State of Connecticut's Biomedical Research Fund. We are inviting MSTC patients who are enrolled in the state's medical marijuana program to complete a survey. The survey will elicit useful demographic data on this patient population, and will provide key insights on: patterns of marijuana use; use of prescription medications, tobacco products, and alcohol; MS symptoms; and perceived benefits and/or adverse effects of medical marijuana. The results could be useful for medical professionals who refer their patients with MS to medical marijuana programs, have considered referring them, or thus far have been reluctant to refer them. The results could also help identify potential gaps in research and guide policy decisions at the state and/or national level regarding medical marijuana use. For more information, contact Project Coordinator Judy Treu (email judy.treu@yalegriffinprc.org).

UPDATE – Community Alliance for Research and Engagement

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) extends the PRC's work with a mission to improve health in New Haven, CT. CARE, in partnership with the New Haven community, is working in tandem with the PRC to take action against chronic diseases and other challenges that threaten the health of community members. For more information, contact CARE Director Alycia Santilli by email at santillia1@southernct.edu.

- **CARE to Coordinate a \$3.7M CDC Grant to Address Health Disparities in New Haven** - Southern CT State University (SCSU) has received a 5-year federal grant of up to \$3.7 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to improve the health of vulnerable populations in New Haven. It will include \$720,000 in the first year, with similar funding likely in the remaining years. CARE will coordinate this project, titled ***Racial and Ethnic Approaches to Community Health***. One-third of the funding will be allocated to the New Haven community via local organizations and leaders to enhance and develop health projects benefiting underserved populations.

Among the plans for the grant are to:

- Improve access to health programs for people at risk for developing a chronic disease. This will include an expansion of the New Haven Health Leaders program that engages local residents and SCSU graduate students to address health disparities.
- Expand Project Access New Haven's community health worker model to help identify people without a primary care physician who need social services such as food and transportation.

- Start a nutrition ranking system at food pantries to help clients identify healthful foods.
- Promote community support for breastfeeding among vulnerable populations.
- Work with transportation officials to help ensure that people can walk and bike to their destinations, as well as have access to bus transportation.

The grant will strengthen the partnership between the Yale School of Public Health (YSPH) and SCSU, with SCSU implementing community activities and YSPH implementing evaluation activities. The evaluation will be led by Kathleen O'Connor Duffany, CARE's Research and Evaluation Director and YSPH faculty. Alycia Santilli, CARE Director and SCSU faculty, said the grant will bolster the efforts of various programs already making a substantial difference in New Haven.

- ***Grant Awarded for New Haven Health Leaders*** - CARE is excited to expand this program with the Eugene Washington Engagement Award from the Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute. The goal is to train a sustainable network of community stakeholders to engage in research and apply evidence-based solutions to prevent chronic disease. The aims are to: (1) train 24 New Haven residents from low-income communities of color on patient-centered outcomes research and community-based participatory research; (2) empower them to disseminate research data and identify community health research priorities; and (3) cultivate community-university research teams to identify evidence-based practices addressing community priorities and translate them into community settings. The grant is funded through August 2020.

Project Findings

The Resulting Variation in Nutrient Intake with the Inclusion of Walnuts in the Diets of Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes: A Randomized, Controlled, Crossover Trial

We recently further analyzed data from a prior PRC study involving 31 men and 81 women at risk for type 2 diabetes. Our original study had found that when these study participants included 56 grams (2 oz.) of walnuts in their daily diets for 6 months, they improved their overall diet quality, compared to when they excluded walnuts. For the subsequent data analyses, we wanted to learn what specific changes occurred in the nutrient intake of these participants while including walnuts in their diets. We had randomly assigned them to either receive, or not receive, dietary advice to control their overall daily calorie intake while eating the walnuts, which provided about 365 calories per day. The study participants who were not advised to control their calorie intake consumed significantly more daily calories than those who did receive this advice, but the increased calorie intake did not adversely affect their cardio-metabolic risk factors. In general, daily walnut consumption led to a significantly greater intake of protein, magnesium, thiamin, total fat, and monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids. For people at risk for type 2 diabetes, walnuts can be considered as part of a healthful diet. For more information, contact Valentine Njike, MD, PRC Assistant Director of Research and Evaluation, email valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org

Grant Proposals and Awards

RECENTLY-SUBMITTED PROPOSALS

- ***Post-prandial Effects of Extra Virgin Olive Oil on Endothelial Function in Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes: A Randomized Crossover Controlled Trial***

In September, the PRC submitted a proposal to Boundary Bend, an Australian olive oil producer, for a proposal to assess the post-prandial (after-meal) effects of extra virgin olive oil on two measures of cardiovascular health - endothelial function and blood pressure - in adults at risk for type 2 diabetes. Diets rich in mono- and polyunsaturated fatty acids have been shown to improve cardiovascular health in people with or at risk for type 2 diabetes. Olive oils have a relatively high content of these

fatty acids, with extra virgin olive oil having a significantly higher amount compared to generic olive oil. The study will build on our prior experience in conducting randomized controlled trials on endothelial function in adults at risk for type 2 diabetes. Participants (20 adults) will consume two meals on separate days: one with generic olive oil and one with extra virgin olive oil, and will have ultrasound testing to assess endothelial function before and after each meal.

- **[Addressing Chronic Conditions in Elementary and Secondary Schools \(ACCESS\)](#)**

The PRC has submitted a proposal to the Valley Community Foundation to improve ways to identify and manage K-12 students with chronic health conditions (CHCs) in public schools in Ansonia, Derby, and Shelton. CHCs such as obesity, asthma, seizure disorders, hearing problems, and behavioral and learning problems are prevalent among school-aged children. We want to improve health and academic outcomes for these students by increasing access to services. The goals of this project are to: (1) establish a working group of stakeholders from the target communities; (2) assess current practices, needs, and resources related to managing CHCs among school-aged students; and (3) identify and implement strategies to screen, refer to care, and track outcomes in students with CHCs.

Presentations

David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP, PRC Director, delivered the following presentations:

- *Disease-Proof: The Remarkable Truth about What Makes Us Well*, keynote presentation on September 14th at the University of Rhode Island Well-Being Conference on Population Health in Providence, RI.
- Panel discussion on September 28th at the International Forum on Food and Nutrition, sponsored by the Barilla Center for Food and Nutrition in New York, NY.
- *Lifestyle is the Medicine – What’s the Spoon?* on October 2nd at the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit Michigan.

Valentine Njike, MD, PRC Assistant Director of Research & Evaluation, presented lectures on biostatistics on August 31st and September 7th for the Griffin Hospital medical residency program. He was also a co-author on two posters presented in July at the Society for Nutrition Education and Behavior’s Annual Conference in Orlando, FL:

- *Building a Cadre of Minority Students in the Area of Childhood Obesity Prevention: A Mentoring Initiative*
- *Factors that Contribute to Effective Nutrition Interventions in Children: A Systemic Review*

Publications

- **Njike VY**, Costales VC, Petraro P, Annam R, Yarandi N, **Katz DL**. *The Resulting Variation in Nutrient Intake With the Inclusion of Walnuts in the Diet of Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes: A Randomized, Controlled, Crossover Trial*. Am J Health Promot. 2018 Aug 1:890117118791120. doi: 10.1177/0890117118791120. [Epub ahead of print]
- Logan AC, Goldenberg JZ, Guiltinan J, Seely D, **Katz DL**. *North American Naturopathic Medicine in the 21st Century: Time for a Seventh Guiding Principle - Scientia Critica*. Explore (NY). 2018 Aug 2. pii: S1550-8307(18)30004-1. doi: 10.1016/j.explore.2018.03.009. [Epub ahead of print]
- Murimi MW, Moyeda-Carabaza AF, Nguyen B, Saha S, Amin R, **Njike V**. *Factors that Contribute to Effective Nutrition Education Interventions in Children: A Systematic Review*. Nutr Rev. 2018 Aug 1;76(8):553-580.

- **Katz DL**, Frates EP, Bonnet JP, Gupta SK, Vartiainen E, Carmona RH. *Lifestyle as Medicine: The Case for a True Health Initiative*. Am J Health Promot. 2018 Jul;32(6):1452-1458. Epub 2017 May 19.
- Arole O, Rajan K, Khan S, Ullah S, Y. **Njike V**. *Decreasing Unnecessary Daily Labs by Choosing Wisely*. Patient Saf Qual Improv. 2017; 5(4):630-633.

In-Service / Training Opportunities

You are invited to join us at our **Journal Club meetings or other professional development sessions**, usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects. Occasionally, we devote these sessions to reviewing recent findings from our own studies.

On October 2nd, we reviewed and critiqued the following publication: Barkin SL, Heerman WJ, et al. *Effect of a Behavioral Intervention for Underserved Preschool-Age Children on Change in Body Mass Index: A Randomized Clinical Trial*. JAMA. 2018 Aug 7;320(5):450-460.

Our next meeting will be held in November at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital. We will soon announce the date, time, and publication to be discussed. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org, or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

Let's Stay in Touch

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director (beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org) or any of the staff listed in this **Newsflash**.

Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center
130 Division Street, Derby, CT. 06418
Phone: (203) 732-1265
Fax: (203) 732-1264

The Yale-Griffin PRC is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program.



Healthier Communities Together

This **Newsflash** was supported by Cooperative Agreement # 1U48DP005023-01 under the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Research Centers Program, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services.