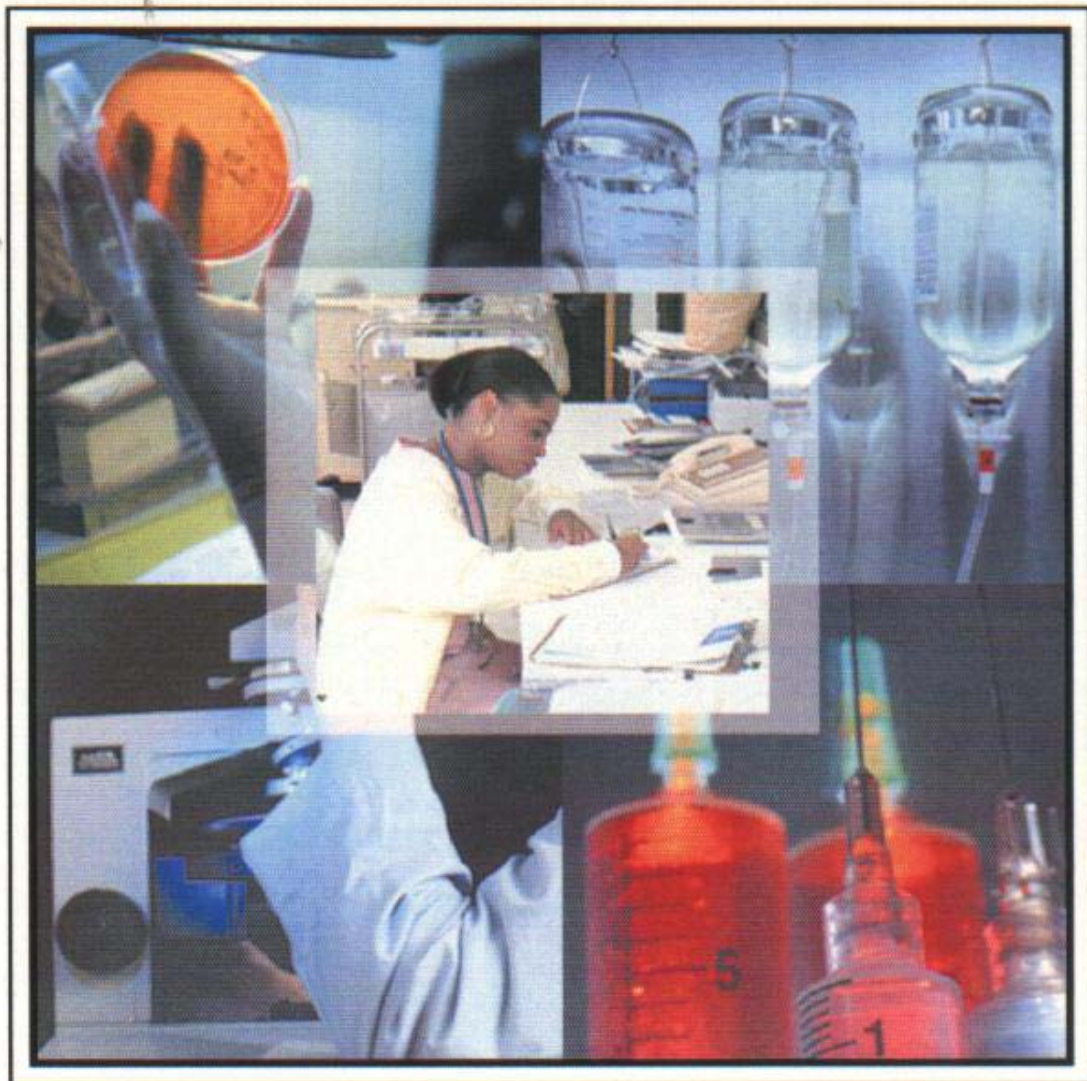


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CONTENTS

- The Association Between Disordered Eating
and Substance Use and Abuse in Women:
A Community-Based Investigation 1
Niva Piran, PhD
Shannon R. Robinson, MEd

A behavioral analysis was conducted of various eating disorder behaviors and their relationship with the lifetime use of different substances in a community-based sample of young adult women, aged 18-25 years. Women with particular eating disorder behaviors were selected from the 517 women who completed the Women's Health Survey. Analyses compared the frequencies of lifetime use of a range of licit and illicit substances as well as the abuse of prescription medications between each of the eating disorder groups and the normal control group. Results showed that as eating disorder behaviors became more severe, or were clustered together, the number of substance classes used increased. Severe bingeing was consistently associated with alcohol use. Dieting and purging, with or without bingeing, was associated with the use of stimulants/amphetamines and the abuse of sleeping pills. The results of this study suggest that the co-occurrence between subclinical levels of eating disorders and the use and abuse of a wide range of substances should inform assessment and treatment planning for adult women.

KEYWORDS. Eating, substance, women, comorbidity

- Diaphragm Acceptability Among Young Women
at Risk for HIV 21
Sheryl Thorburn, PhD, MPH
S. Marie Harvey, DrPH
Jeffrey Tipton, DO, MPH

Objectives. The purpose of this study was to increase understanding of acceptability of the diaphragm among young women at risk for HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) in the U.S.

Methods. A total of 140 young (aged 18-25 years) women who had never used the diaphragm and who were at risk for HIV and other STIs completed questionnaires that included questions about the diaphragm and other sexual and reproductive health topics. These women were participants in a focus group study.

Results. The majority of participants perceived that the diaphragm had several characteristics (e.g., is a method they can control, is effective in preventing pregnancy, will not cause side effects, does not decrease sexual pleasure) considered important when selecting a birth control method. However, most were not confident in various aspects of diaphragm use, including their ability to use the method correctly, without breaking the mood, or when sexually excited. In multivariate analyses, intention to use the diaphragm was significantly higher among participants who were less motivated to avoid pregnancy and those with greater perceived self-efficacy to use a diaphragm in different contexts (e.g., when sexually excited).

Conclusion. The diaphragm has characteristics that some women consider desirable, suggesting that it could be an acceptable HIV prevention method for some at-risk women.

KEYWORDS. Diaphragm, acceptability, HIV prevention, women

Barriers to Physical Activity Among Women in the Rural Midwest

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Michael Elliott, PhD

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Physical activity is an important factor in chronic disease control and prevention. Yet women and rural residents consistently report lower rates of physical activity than their male and urban/suburban counterparts. The objective of this study was to assess the relationship between personal, social, and environmental barriers and meeting moderate physical activity recommendations in a sample of rural women. Data were obtained from a telephone survey of 2,510 residents of rural southeastern Missouri, Tennessee, and Arkansas. After adjusting for age and income, women who identified personal barriers, such as lack of time, no motivation, disinterest in exercise, and having no one to exercise with were less likely to meet physical activity recommendations. There was evidence of a dose-response relationship between the number of barriers identified and meeting moderate physical activity recommendations among women with higher incomes and women with lower incomes; however, this relationship was most striking among women with annual household incomes of \$25,000 or more. These findings may be used to tailor physical activity interventions to women in rural communities.

KEYWORDS. Physical activity, women, rural populations, barriers to physical activity

Obesity in Low-Income Rural Women:
Qualitative Insights About Physical Activity
and Eating Patterns

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Body weight is inversely related to socioeconomic status (SES) in women in the United States (U.S.). Reasons for the social differential in weight are poorly understood. This investigation sought to understand overweight and obesity from the perspective of low-income mothers living in rural New York State, focusing in particular on challenges to maintaining a healthy weight that may be unique to rural poverty. In-depth interviews with 28 women, who were interviewed 3 times over a 3-year period, were audiotaped, transcribed, and analyzed using the constant comparative method. Findings suggest that transportation difficulties confined some women to their homes, which were physical settings offering little opportunity for physical activity. Food insecurity and associated fluctuating household food supplies contributed to disordered eating patterns and to perceptions of dietary deprivation that affected food intake. Rural isolation contributed to negative emotional states that some women alleviated by eating. This research elucidates factors contributing to obesity among rural, economically disadvantaged women, highlighting the interplay between the structural constraints imposed by rural poverty and women's physical activity, eating patterns, body image, and weight. These insights further the understanding of social inequalities in health and could inform the design of future research aimed at improving the health status of low-income women and families.

KEYWORDS. Body weight, obesity, poverty, physical activity, eating patterns, food insecurity, rural health, women's health, transportation, qualitative research

Healthy Eating, Exercise, and Weight:
Impressions of Sexual Minority Women

79

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Obesity is a risk factor for multiple disease outcomes, including cancer and cardiovascular disease. A healthy diet and physically active lifestyle can prevent obesity. Sexual orientation is an important demographic factor that has been suggested to affect engagement in health-related behaviors, and interventions developed for the general population of women are likely to be less effective in assisting sexual minority women to make healthy choices. We conducted seven focus groups with sexual minority women (i.e., lesbians and bisexual women) to explore issues, including barriers and motivations, regarding healthy eating, physical activity, and weight in this population. The participants reported a wide range of levels of engagement in health-related behaviors. While nearly all of the participants reported some awareness of the importance of good dietary choices, the majority

reported some confusion about what constitutes a healthy diet. In contrast, the majority of participants seemed clearly aware that regular exercise was important for good health. These data can guide the design of effective intervention strategies to improve health behaviors in sexual minority women.

KEYWORDS. Sexual minority women, obesity, intervention design, focus groups

Framing Breastfeeding and Formula-Feeding Messages in Popular U.S. Magazines

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Leah Frerichs, MS

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Media framing of infant feeding has the ability to influence knowledge and views of the barriers, benefits, and solutions inherent in breastfeeding or formula-feeding. This study examined how seven popular U.S. parenting, general women's, and African American magazines framed breastfeeding and formula-feeding messages to determine whether a sense-making approach was used and the extent to which visual images portrayed feeding practices. Analysis included 615 articles published from 1997 to 2003 that referred to infant feeding. Text and images were analyzed. The magazines provided more information on breastfeeding than formula feeding. Parenting magazines included more advice than barriers or benefits. African American magazines presented more breastfeeding benefits, and general women's magazines contained the least infant-feeding information. Messages were focused on individualized breastfeeding barriers and advice, seldom covered social and environmental issues, and placed much of the responsibility of infant feeding on the mother, while the role of social and partner support was diminished. Bottle-feeding images were nearly as common as breastfeeding images. Findings can be used by public health practitioners to increase the likelihood of reaching certain target audiences through popular magazines.

KEYWORDS. Breastfeeding, sense-making, magazines, infants, framing

Prisoners' Perspectives of Health Problems and Healthcare in a US Women's Jail

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In the last decade, the number of women in US jails has increased at an annual average of 7.0%. These women typically suffer from untreated, serious health problems. This participatory research project explored health problems and healthcare from the perspective of women incarcerated in a county detention facility located in the western US. A convenience sample of 78 inmates and former inmates participated in 10 focus groups. Using the constant comparative method, the data analysis revealed that they suffered from physical, mental, and iatrogenic

health problems. Barriers to care included concerns about privacy and dignity as well as waiting time for treatment, co-payments, and concealing problems in order to obtain work opportunities. Women in the project identified solutions for these problems and analyzed why incarceration made them aware of previously ignored health concerns. The findings suggest the importance of further research with this vulnerable, hidden population.

KEYWORDS. Prisoners, women's health, vulnerable populations, jails, health services accessibility