Abstract

- Healthy People 2020 sets goals in the areas of public health for the nation. Health Impact Assessments (HIA) help assess a community’s health. A paucity of literature exists on HIAs conducted at the university level. A survey would begin the research to create a full HIA.
- Objective: The purpose of this study is lay the groundwork for an HIA at the university level.
- Methods: An electronic survey will be sent to a random sample from a stratified population of students at Texas State University. The results will be compiled and analyzed. To further elucidate the responses, select participants will be invited back for a one-hour focus group. The discussion will be recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The overall analysis will compare the health practices of the student body with the national goals of health, nutrition, and exercise as set by Healthy People 2020.
- Significance to field: Not only does the US lag behind other countries with HIAs, there is a gap in the literature on HIAs conducted at the university level. The results of this study will help lay the groundwork for a full HIA.

Methods

- If approved by the university IRB, we intend to disseminate electronic surveys toward the end of the spring semester, 2016. Depending on the response rate, results will ideally be tabulated and analyzed by the end of the summer.
- Our intent is to enable a comparison of our student population with national averages in order to help gauge the effectiveness of university public health initiatives and local public health interventions.
- Below illustrates national statistics as reported at the end of 2015.

Examples

- Healthy People 2020 is a set of goals and objectives with 10-year targets designed to guide national health promotion and disease prevention efforts to improve the health of all people in the United States. It is broken down into two topic areas and 26 leading indicators (Brochure).
- Healthy Students 2020
- Our study intends to evaluate results from a small HIA collected from a sample of students from Texas State University to compare the results to the goals of Healthy Students 2020. This survey is an effort to produce an HIA, or lay the groundwork for the same, as described in Establishing the Practice of Health Impact Assessment in the United States (Wendel, 2012). Due to the young age of our student population and the healthy behavior of our student population, we expect the sample to meet or exceed the goals of Healthy Students 2020. This study fills a gap in the literature that compares any student population with the goals of Healthy People 2020. The results of this study will help the university gauge whether its existing practices of encouraging healthy behavior align with national public health goals.

Survey Instrument

A survey has been developed in cooperation with the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Section of the Texas Department of State Health Services. This survey would begin the research to create a full HIA. Paper surveys will be manually distributed outside the LBJ Student Center by two researchers. The results will be compiled and analyzed. To further elucidate the responses, select participants will be invited back for a one-hour focus group. The discussion will be recorded and transcribed for further analysis. The overall analysis will compare the health practices of the student body with the national goals of health, nutrition, and exercise as set by Healthy People 2020.

Conclusions

- This study is in its initial stages.
- We plan to calculate and publish comparisons by the end of the summer.
- Future research emanating from this study could establish a university-level Health Impact Assessment.
- IRB #2015T4765