

Physician Survey of Practices on Diet, Physical Activity, and Weight Control

Study Sponsors

This survey is being sponsored by The National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

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Purpose

The purpose of this study is to obtain current, national data on physician's knowledge, attitudes, and activities related to diet, physical activity, and weight control. In addition, the study will seek information on what administrative structures support or hinder physician's practices in these areas. Study data will be used to improve public health experts' understanding of whether and how related practices are implemented in primary care settings, with the ultimate goal being to improve the quality of the nations' health.

Background Information

There is an increasing body of literature supporting the relationship between lifestyle factors and disease. Diet, physical activity and weight control influence the risk and prognosis for many chronic diseases. Obesity, physical inactivity, and poor diet are major problems affecting quality of life for both adults and children. Though physicians play a key role in providing information to patients about the benefits of a healthy lifestyle, little is known about physician practices and attitudes related to diet, physical activity or weight control, or the administrative structures related to these practices.

Participation

A nationally representative sample of 2,000 physicians in the specialties of Internal Medicine, Pediatrics, Family Practice, and Obstetrics/Gynecology were randomly selected from a nation-wide database of physicians to receive a survey. Among these practices, an additional sub sample of 1,000 practice administrators was selected to receive a brief administrative survey.

Your participation is voluntary, and there are no penalties to you for not responding. However, not responding could affect the accuracy of results, and your point of view may not be represented in the findings of the study.

Questionnaire Description

The Physician Survey of Practices on Diet, Physical Activity, and Weight Control collects information using two different questionnaires. The Physician Questionnaire asks questions about how knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to diet, physical activity, and weight control have been integrated into Physician practices. The Administrator

Questionnaire collects information about administrative protocols and systems that could influence physician behavior.

Physician questions cover such areas as:

- o Clinical practice behaviors
- o Assessment, referral, counseling, general guidance about diet, physical activity and weight
- o Knowledge of the science and available guidelines
- o Attitudes, self-efficacy and importance of diet, physical activity and weight control in disease prevention
- o Personal habits of physicians related to diet, exercise, and weight control

Administrator questions include:

- o Practice characteristics such as location, size affiliation (number and type of health care professionals)
- o Patient characteristics
- o Practice guidelines, reminders, protocols
- o Availability and adequacy of reimbursement and billing practices
- o Availability of community resources for referrals

Confidentiality of Responses

All survey responses will be kept confidential, with each survey assigned an identification number. The data file with names and numbers will be stored separately from all completed surveys and the data file containing survey responses. Names will never be directly associated with responses. Data from individual responses will be aggregated and reported in statistical form. Comments from individual surveys may be thematically coded and reported in the aggregate. Some comments may be quoted verbatim but without attribution to the individual making the comment.

Uses of the Data

Results of the survey will be used in:

- o Publications in peer-reviewed journals;
- o Presentations at national meetings; and
- o Government reports on health care policy.

Data will also be used to provide survey analysis experience for post-doctoral fellows, and instruments will be made available for use by other investigators researching similar issues.

Further Questions

If you have questions about the study, please call 1-800-937-8281 x2786 toll-free to speak with Dr. Caroline McLeod, the Project Director. Or, please call the Government Project Officer at the National Cancer Institute, Dr. Ashley Wilder Smith at (301) 451-1843.