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This document is part of a collection that serves two purposes. First, it is a digital archive for a sampling of unpublished documents, presentations, questionnaires and limited publications resulting from over forty years of research. Second, it is a public archive for data on college student drinking patterns on the national and international level collected for over 20 years. Research topics by Dr. Engs have included the exploration of hypotheses concerning the determinants of behaviors such as student drinking patterns; models that have examine the etiology of cycles of prohibition and temperance movements, origins of western European drinking cultures (attitudes and behaviors concerning alcohol) from antiquity, eugenics, Progressive Era, and other social reform movements with moral overtones-Clean Living Movements; biographies of health and social reformers including Upton Sinclair; and oral histories of elderly monks.

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Are We Teaching Them What They Want To Know?

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The Problem

Are you "turning on" your class to health education? Are you capturing the interests of your students? Do you know your students' major health concerns? If health education classes are to be relevant and meaningful, the answers to these questions must be "yes." The first step in changing these answers to the affirmative is to find out what students want to know about health. This was accomplished in a recent survey conducted by Engs (1) of 285 Personal Health students at the University of Oregon. The problem was to determine the general health concerns of college students and how these are affected by sex, birth order, and religion. A health concern, as defined for this study, is that which causes an individual to feel anxious, worried, interested in or disturbed because of it's potentiality of affecting his, his family's, or his society's physical, mental, or social well-being.

How Was It Solved?

To solve the problem a 50-item Health Concern Questionnaire was developed from the 20 highest health worries for males and females in Smith's (2) Study, the ten leading causes of death in the United States (3), and other health concerns expressed by college students. After the Health Concern Questionnaire was developed, validated and checked for reliability, it was administered to 285 students taking Personal Health. To determine the degree of concern the questionnaire was set up as a summated rating-type scale and assigns each position a scale value of five to one as follows:

Degree of Concern

Extremely concerned

Very concerned

Moderately concerned

Mildly concerned
 Not concerned

Assigned Weight

- 5 (4.56-5.00)
- 4 (3.56-4.55)
- 3 (2.56-3.55)
- 2 (1.56-2.55)
- 1 (1.00-1.55)

What Were the Results?

1. *General Health Concerns of College Students*

TABLE 1

Health Concerns of 285 Personal Health Students at the University of Oregon, Spring Term 1970, Ranked by Mean Score (5 points highest possible score)

Order	Concern	Mean Response
1	Air Pollution	4.27
2	Water Pollution	4.26
3	Population Explosion	4.07
4	Birth Control	3.99
5	Vietnam Combat	3.90
6	Biological and Chemical Warfare	3.60
7	Atomic Warfare	3.58
8	Auto Accidents	3.53
9	What I'll be Like in 10 or 15 Years	3.52
10	Use of Contraceptives	3.37
11	Cancer	3.34
12	Starvation and Malnutrition	3.32
13	Drug Abuse	3.27
14	Smoking and Disease	3.26
15	Mental Illness	3.03
16	Riots	2.99
17	Venereal Disease	2.97
18	Eye Disorders and Blindness	2.97
19	Emphysema or Respiratory Disease	2.93
20	Heart Disease	2.87
21	Sex Behavior	2.86
22	Pregnancy	2.75
23	Childbirth	2.71
24	Radiation	2.69
25	Nervousness	2.66
26	Alcohol Dependence	2.60
27	Poor Teeth or Decay	2.59
28	Death	2.57
29	Overweight	2.53
30	Acne	2.52
31	Suicide	2.46
32	Moodiness	2.45
33	Tuberculosis	2.27
34	Being Burned	2.25
35	Halitosis or Body Order	2.22
36	Mononucleosis	2.22
37	Airplane Accidents	2.22
38	Sterility	2.21
39	Firearm Accidents	2.20
40	Kdiney Disease	2.11
41	Drowning	2.09
42	Headaches	2.06
43	Liver Diseases	2.05
44	Colds	2.04
45	Homosexuality	1.93
46	Accidents Due to Electric Current	1.90
47	Varicose Veins	1.90
48	Masturbation	1.82
49	Nausea	1.79
50	Poisoning by Snakes	1.63

It is interesting to note that the college students rated only seven of the 50 possible items Very Concerned. They are listed in their rank order as follows: 1) air pollution, 2) water pollution, 3) population explosion, 4) birth control, 5) Vietnam combat, 6) biological and chemical warfare, and 7) atomic warfare. One can quickly observe that most of the leading seven health concerns were about environmental issues and war. It would appear that the college students in this study were more concerned about community health rather than individual health problems. For example, air pollution ranked number one whereas poor teeth or decay ranked 27 on the questionnaire.

2. Comparison of Health Concerns by Sex

This study found a statistically significant difference between male and female students in their total degree of concern about 19 items on the Health Concern Questionnaire. Females were significantly more concerned about 17 health items which affected them individually, such as: pregnancy, over-weight, varicose veins, headaches, nausea and childbirth. The males were significantly more concerned about only two items: What I'll be like in 10 or 15 years, and acne.

3. Comparisons of Health Concerns by Birth Order

Statistically, there was no significant difference between first born and later born students in the total degree of health concern.

4. Comparisons of Health Concerns by Religion

This comparison also revealed there was no significant difference among Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, and other religious backgrounds in their total degree of concern about health items.

Recommendations

Health educators, at all levels of instruction, should administer a Health Concern Questionnaire at the beginning of the school term in order to develop and revise a curriculum according to the health concerns of the students. By using this questionnaire the teacher is assured he is teaching them what they want to know.

REFERENCES

1. Engs, Ruth C., "The Health Concerns of College Students Enrolled in the Spring Term, 1970 Personal Health Course at the University of Oregon," (unpublished masters thesis, Department of Health Education, University of Oregon, 1970).
2. Smith, Warren E., "The Health Worries of 961 Public High School Students in Oregon," (unpublished doctoral dissertation, School of Education, Stanford University, 1957).
3. U.S., Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1969, (Washington, D.C., 1969).