

an event going. Please ask yourself (and your colleagues) to accept the challenge of conducting a 1995 JRFH event. Not only will it be rewarding for you, but it will also significantly help our Association to move forward financially. JRFH is one of the best advocacy programs we have. It helps us promote healthy life-styles, it helps our budget, and it sustains advocacy for NAHPERD. Members who conduct JRFH events during 1995 are also entitled to a onetime, one-year FREE NAHPERD MEMBERSHIP, plus a \$5 membership discount for each consecutive membership thereafter. The free membership and/or discount is available by submitting a NAHPERD Membership Application to this office.

K. I continue to need your help in identifying and/or contacting potential exhibitors for our annual conference and for some of our special workshops. Exhibitors prefer to schedule at least one year in advance; therefore, it is never too early to establish contact with them. Exhibit fees for 1995 are \$50 per booth for nonprofit exhibitors and \$65 per booth for profit-oriented/commercial exhibitors.

NAHPERD can "exhibit" for those who are unable to be physically present at conferences or workshops. We can maintain a booth and/or place materials in packets of all delegates. It is exhibitor responsibility to get materials to us, and we will take it from there. Fees for exhibiting in this manner are the same as those cited above. Please help me "spread the word" on exhibits. All exhibit contracts are initiated through the office of the Executive Director.

L. We still have a need for a second PEPI and Public Relations Coordinator who can work with and complement Kathy Brusnahan, our present PEPI Coordinator. Two coordinators, could better serve NAHPERD with divided responsibilities for two areas of Nebraska. We have a great need for a coordinator from central or western Nebraska. PEPI Coordinator is really a fun position. If you are interested in a PEPI and Public Relations position, please contact me or Kathy Brusnahan or President Loper.

M. There are other involvements which affect this office, however, I've mentioned enough for this time. This report is my second to be made for our NEBRASKA JOURNAL editor, Dr. Stephen Glass of Wayne State College. This will reach you within the 1995 Spring issue. Please let Dr. Glass know what you think of the Spring issue. And better yet, write an article for the NEBRASKA JOURNAL and send it to editor Glass. If you have something with a critical "time date," send it to me for dissemination via either a Newsletter and/or a targeted mailing to those with a critical need to know. This office is here to serve YOU.

Body Image Assessment and Weight Loss Practices of Adolescent Females in Nebraska

*Kristine Jankovitz, M.S., and Ian M. Newman, Ph.D.
Nebraska Prevention Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse
University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 256 Mabel Lee Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0229*

Introduction

The overemphasis on the image of a thin female may contribute to harmful weight loss practices and eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia in female adolescents (Shisslak, 1990). The current study describes weight loss practices and personal assessment of body weight by adolescent females in Nebraska. The 1993 Nebraska Youth Risk Behavior Survey (NYRBS) suggests a larger proportion of female students were actively engaged in efforts to lose weight compared to a similar nationwide sample. Additionally, a larger proportion of Nebraska high school females see themselves as overweight in comparison to high school females throughout the United States. The accuracy of this overweight identification is supported by the results from a separate study, which found that Nebraska high school females had significantly greater skinfold measurement values in comparison to national norms (Loper & Wandzilak, 1989).

Perceived Body Weight

The 1993 NYRBS included a random sample of 3176 Nebraska public school students in grades nine through twelve. Of the 1559 females, more than half (52.4%) judged themselves to be very overweight or overweight. By comparison, data from the 1991 National Youth Risk Behavior Survey results showed that 39.1% of the females identified themselves as very overweight or overweight (Table 1). Actual body weight was not measured for either sample.

Table 1: Self-Reported Body Assessment, "How do you see yourself?"

Category	Nebraska	USA
Very overweight	7.7%	5.7%
Overweight	44.7%	33.4%
About right	37.7%	44.2%
Very underweight	1.6%	2.8%
Underweight	8.3%	13.9%
N =	1559	6270

Attempting to Lose Weight

Students were asked if they were attempting to lose, gain, maintain, or do nothing about their weight. Of the total Nebraska female sample, 66.1% were trying to lose weight compared to 56.6% of the total national female sample. Of those who judged themselves "very overweight" or "overweight," almost 91% of both the Nebraska and national samples were trying to lose weight. Of those who judged themselves "about the right weight," 44% of the Nebraska sample were trying to lose weight as were 42% of the national sample. Among the Nebraska females who judged themselves as "very underweight" or "underweight" almost 20%, compared to 13% of the national sample, were still trying to lose weight even though they considered themselves to be underweight or very underweight.

Safer and Less Safe Weight Loss Methods

The 1993 NYRBS asked two questions about weight loss methods. One question provided generally acceptable responses: dieting, exercising, or a combination of both. The second question asked about less acceptable weight loss methods: vomiting, diet pills, or a combination of both. The results of these two questions are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2: "During the past 7 days, which one of the following did you do to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?"

	Very Overweight/ Overweight		About Right		Very Underweight/ Underweight	
	NE	USA	NE	USA	NE	USA
Did not try	12.2%	14.5%	35.4%	43.9%	58.4%	71.4%
Dieted	16.0%	17.5%	6.0%	7.0%	5.8%	3.3%
Exercised	21.9%	20.2%	33.7%	26.4%	20.1%	12.3%
Dieted & Exercised	43.0%	38.9%	20.8%	17.7%	8.4%	5.9%
Other	6.9%	8.8%	4.1%	4.9%	7.1%	7.0%
N =	812	2447	587	2773	154	1046

Eighty-one percent of overweight Nebraska students were attempting to lose weight by dieting, exercising, or some combination of both compared to 76.6% of the national sample. Among the Nebraska students who considered their weight about right, yet were attempting to lose weight, 61% were dieting, exercising, or doing both compared to 51% nationally. More than one-third (34.3%) of the underweight

Nebraska students were attempting to lose weight by dieting, exercising, or some combination of both compared to 21.5% of the national sample. For overweight students, in Nebraska and nationwide, the combination of dieting and exercise was the weight loss method of choice. For those who judged their weight to be about right or underweight, exercise was the weight loss method of choice.

Table 3: "During the past 7 days, which one of the following did you do to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight?"

	Very Overweight/ Overweight		About Right		Very Underweight/ Underweight	
	NE	USA	NE	USA	NE	USA
did not try	18.2%	18.9%	52.7%	53.6%	74.5%	78.2%
vomited	3.2%	2.7%	1.7%	1.7%	2.0%	1.5%
diet pills	6.4%	3.0%	1.2%	1.0%	1.3%	.5%
vomit & diet pills	1.6%	1.1%	.2%	.3%	1.3%	.6%
other	70.6%	74.3%	44.3%	43.5%	20.9%	19.2%
N =	813	2446	583	2769	153	1043

The choice of less acceptable weight loss practices was more common among overweight students than those who judged themselves as about right or underweight. In total, 11.2% of the Nebraska overweight students were attempting to lose weight by vomiting, taking diet pills, or a combination of both. Of those who were about the right weight, 3.1% were vomiting, taking diet pills, or a combination of both. Of the underweight students, 4.6% were practicing these unsafe behaviors. By comparison, nationally 6.8% of the overweight, 3% of the about right, and 2.6% of the underweight students were using these methods to lose weight.

Discussion

Obesity and its associated health problems have traditionally been a focus for nutrition education (Collins, 1988). These data suggest that nutrition education in Nebraska may have had both positive and negative outcomes. Education which directs overweight students to lose weight appears to have been successful in that almost 91% of the overweight Nebraska females surveyed were trying to lose weight. However, social pressures to be thin and the dramatic increase in the incidence of eating disorders among young women indicate a

References Cited

Collins, M. E. (1988). Education for healthy body weight: Helping adolescents balance the cultural pressure for thinness. Journal of School Health, 58, 227-231.

Loper, D.A., Wandzilak, T. (1989). Nebraska youth fitness study and norm tables. Unpublished manuscript, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Center for Fitness and Healthful Living Education and the Nebraska Department of Education.

Shisslak, C.M., Crago, M., & Neal, M.E. (1990). Prevention of eating disorders among adolescents. American Journal of Health Promotion, 5, 100-105.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (1991). "Body-weight perceptions and selected weight management goals and practices of high school students - United States, 1990," Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 40, 741.

failure on the part of education to discourage unsafe weight-loss methods. The fact that almost 47% of the Nebraska adolescent females who identified themselves as at or below the right weight were trying to lose weight, suggests that girls need assistance in understanding appropriate and healthy body weights and the risks of weight loss programs.

Almost 7% of the Nebraska females engaged in inappropriate weight loss methods. Calorie reduction and exercise are appropriate strategies for producing weight loss, however, these methods can be dangerous if taken to an extreme. Clearly, females need to be educated about the dangers of extreme dieting and exercising, and other inappropriate practices. Such education programs should involve families and schools, and should support the development of perceptions about healthy weight and body image (MMWR, 1991). Skills associated with planning safe exercise regimes and nutritional skills, such as interpreting product labels and evaluating personal diets, should be central to nutrition and weight management education. Students should also be helped to understand and accept the natural physical changes and the underlying biochemistry associated with maturation that contribute to weight gain and weight loss. Media images of females need to be carefully analyzed in terms of health. The long-standing preference for showing excessively thin models in the media and the new trend to reverse this practice should be discussed and analyzed in terms of health and fitness.

Health professionals, school nurses, teachers, dietitians, nutritionists and family physicians can all assist the female student to understand the basic concepts associated with growth and development, a healthy body weight, and realistic strategies to understand and cope with the social pressure for thinness and the positive health values of appropriate body weight.

Applications

This study describes weight loss practices and body image assessment. Not addressed in this analysis, but deserving of study, is why a larger proportion of Nebraska females see themselves as overweight compared to the rest of the nation, and also why—as the Loper & Wandzilak study shows—a larger proportion of Nebraska females are overweight compared to national norms.

Physical Best: Still Alive and Well by Aleita Hass-Holcombe Corvallis, Oregon

To refresh your memory, in December of '93, AAHPED and the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research (CIAR) established an exciting partnership. The major feature of the partnership was that Physical Best would continue to pursue the development of educational materials to promote health related fitness programs. The responsibility for updating assessment components would belong to CIAR. As a member of the Physical Best Steering Committee (PBSC), I believe this partnership is proving to be a good one.

Physical Best's philosophy has always tried to communicate the vision that assessment is only one step in moving students toward health related fitness and should be part of an educational process. When used to establish baselines for goal setting, assessment plays an important part in the educational process. However, moving beyond assessment requires motivational educational strategies reinforced by up-to-date educational materials. **Physical Best is committed to providing these educational components.**

Coming soon are several Physical Best educational supplements and materials that we hope will truly assist teachers in facilitating students'

continued on page 24



Nebraska Association for
Health, Physical Education,
Recreation and Dance

September 2, 1994

Kristine Jankovitz, M.S.
Ian M. Newman, Ph.D.
Nebraska Prevention Center for Alcohol and Drug Abuse
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
256 Mabel Lee Hall
Lincoln, NE 68588-0229

Dear Ms. Jankovitz,

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your manuscript entitled "Body Image Assessment and Weight Loss Practices of Adolescent Females in Nebraska" that you have submitted for consideration by the Nebraska Journal. The manuscript will be forwarded to two reviewers familiar with the subject area. Since the review process is to be blind, I took the liberty of removing your name and institution from the title page of the review copies.

You will be notified as to the acceptability of the paper as promptly as possible. Please address all correspondence to the editor if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for your interest in publishing in the Nebraska Journal.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Glass, Ph.D.
Editor,
The Nebraska Journal for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance

Division of Human Performance and Leisure Studies
Wayne State College
Wayne, NE 68787
402-375-7463