

Impact of the InShape (Alcohol/Drug) Prevention Plus Wellness (PPW) Brief Intervention on Tuskegee University Students' Attitudes Toward Substance Use and Health Behavior Patterns

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Abstract

Substance use and health behaviors among college students are critical factors influencing academic success, mental health, and long-term wellness. This pilot study investigated the impact of an educational intervention on the substance use and health behavior attitudes among 18-25-year-old students in physical education courses at Tuskegee University. Descriptive statistics were conducted to assess participants' attitudes toward substance use (including alcohol, tobacco, marijuana, and other drugs) after exposure to the educational intervention. Thematic content analysis was used to evaluate participants' attitudes toward the educational intervention. Findings reveal 88% of participants indicated favorable ratings for the intervention and 90% indicated the intervention had a moderate or greater impact on helping them avoid substances. The emergent themes showed the intervention promoted participant endorsement of practicing healthy habits such as improving health and eating properly.

Keywords: Mental Health, Student Wellness, Physical Education, Health Behavior

1. Introduction

College students are at a vulnerable life stage where lifestyle choices can impact their health and academic performance. Research indicates that substance use among college students is often accompanied by risk behaviors affecting both physical and mental health. This study examines substance use and health behavior patterns among college students at Tuskegee University, focusing on 18-25-year-olds enrolled in physical education courses [1].

1.1. Literature Review

Substance use among college students is an ongoing public health challenge, with increased attention to unique risks faced by students at historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), particularly those located in rural settings. Rural HBCUs, such as Tuskegee University, often serve as both educational and social support networks within their communities, addressing health disparities that disproportionately affect Black students. These students experience higher rates of tobacco and alcohol use, which are often linked to limited access to health resources and increased social stressors in rural areas [2]. The prevalence of substance use among rural HBCU students is influenced by various socio-environmental factors.

Limited access to mental health and wellness resources, combined with heightened exposure to socioeconomic stress, exacerbates substance use behaviors in these communities. These challenges make programs like the In-Shape Prevention Plus Wellness (PPW) intervention critical in promoting health among college students. PPW, which integrates substance use prevention with wellness components, has shown success in improving lifestyle behaviors and reducing substance use in college settings. This model not only addresses substance use but also promotes positive behaviors such as physical activity and stress management, which are vital in managing rural health disparities [3,4]. Moreover, research indicates that HBCU students face unique cultural and environmental factors that influence substance use. These students are more likely to rely on campus-based interventions for health education and wellness services, as external community health resources are often limited in rural areas. Interventions that incorporate culturally relevant messaging and focus on holistic wellness targeting physical, mental, and social health are especially effective in HBCU settings. The socio-ecological model highlights the importance of addressing multiple levels of influence, including individual behaviors,

community norms, and institutional support systems. This approach aligns with the PPW model by encouraging positive health behaviors within a supportive academic environment [5-7].

2. Results

Data was collected from 18–25-year-old college students enrolled in physical education courses. Participants completed an online survey after completing the intervention. Participants provided quantitative ratings regarding how much they liked the content of the intervention and

how much the intervention was likely to help them avoid substance use. A total of 49 participants completed the post assessment the surveys.

Table 1 presents a summary of ratings for how much participants liked the intervention. Results show that 88% of participants indicated they liked the intervention from a moderate amount to a great deal. Data further shows that 90% of participants indicated the intervention would help them avoid substances from a moderate amount to a great deal.

Rating	n	% of Total
How much did you like the intervention?		
A great deal	19	39
A lot	13	27
A moderate amount	11	22
A little	2	4
None at all	4	8
Total	49	100
How much would the intervention help you to avoid substances?		
A great deal	22	45
A lot	8	16
A moderate amount	14	29
A little	1	2
None at all	4	8
Total	49	100

Table 1: Results from Quantitative Survey Ratings

Participants were asked to provide open-ended comments regarding what they liked most about the educational intervention. A total of 33 of 49 participants provided open-ended comments to this item. Data were analyzed through thematic content analysis.

Results in Table 2 shows five prominent emergent themes from that analysis. The top two themes pertained to improving healthy habits. The most commonly occurring theme was the need to improve health with 36% of participants providing comments that were coded to this theme.

Emergent Theme	# Participants Comments	% of Participants
Contributing to Theme		
Need to improve health	12	36
Need to improve eating habits	7	21
Importance of goal setting	6	18
Awareness	5	15
Need for physical activity	4	12

Table 2: Emergent Themes from Open-ended Survey Response

3. Discussion

The results show that the educational intervention had a positive impact on improving participants' attitudes toward the need for healthy behaviors and the importance of sustaining from substance use. Limitations of the research include small sample size and brief time between intervention and the post assessment survey. Implications for further research are to conduct the sample with a larger sample size and to conduct a longitudinal study to assess

the long-term impact of the intervention on actual behavior. Additional research could conduct a cross-sectional study to determine the effectiveness of the intervention across varying demographic groups.

4. Conclusion

The findings from this pilot underscore the importance of targeted interventions that address specific substance use behaviors among college students. These findings contribute

to the broader dialogue on promoting wellness and reducing health risks among students in college environments.

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