

# The Yale-Griffin Prevention Research Center

## Newsflash

### Winter 2018 Issue

The PRC has prepared this electronic **Newsflash** to keep you informed about our work and invite you to take part in our research, education and outreach activities. It serves as a communication tool for our Community Committee members, and our colleagues in academia, education, clinical settings, and social service agencies. If you have ideas for working together on shared projects, please let us know.

**For more information about the Yale-Griffin PRC:**

Please visit our website at <http://www.yalegriffinprc.org>

### PRC Updates

**Community Committee Meeting:** We plan to hold our annual meeting sometime in March, and will get in touch with members of this committee once we have more information about the date and time.

**PRC Annual Meeting:** On November 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, the Yale-Griffin PRC participated in the annual meeting of the national PRC Network of 26 research centers funded by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC). Beth Comerford, Valentine Njike, Kim Doughty, Kathleen O'Connor Duffany, and Alycia Santilli attended on behalf of our PRC. Kathleen and Alycia presented the results of a Community Alliance for Research & Engagement (CARE) survey of residents of low-income neighborhoods in New Haven regarding health, diet, exercise, smoking habits, and neighborhood safety.

### Current Projects

#### **UPDATE - Valley Initiative to Advance Health & Learning in Schools (VITAHLS)**

This initiative, led by the PRC and Griffin Hospital in partnership with school and community partners, aims to develop, implement, evaluate, and sustain comprehensive school-based programming focusing on nutrition and physical activity for PreK-12 students. Our school partners are the Ansonia, Derby, Seymour, Shelton and Naugatuck school districts, and Emmett O'Brien Regional Technical School. For more information, contact VITAHLS Coordinator Kim Doughty (email [kim.doughty@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:kim.doughty@yalegriffinprc.org)).

- **Mini-grants to school districts:** This year, the PRC has awarded mini-grants of up to \$1500 per district for project proposals submitted by representatives of each district. The PRC is available to provide assistance and training to evaluate the impact of each project. Below are descriptions of projects that were funded, with amounts ranging from \$300 to \$1500 per project.

**Ansonia: Morning Marathon Club (Prendergast Elementary School)** - A before-school program will take place 1-2 times per week. The goal is for students to walk or run 1 mile each time they meet, until they have walked a total of 23 miles. At the end of the program, they will walk or run a 5K, thus completing the equivalent of a full marathon.

**Derby: "Farm to Family" Project (Litter Raiders University and Irving Elementary School)** - Pre-K and fourth grade students and parents/guardians will visit a local farm to learn about fruits and vegetables and hand-pick seasonal produce. A Food Corps service member will offer a cooking class.

Derby: Fitness Center Improvement (Derby High School) -The school will purchase/install a new treadmill for its fitness center.

Seymour: Kinesthetic (Movement-Promoting) Classrooms (Bungay Elementary School) - Some K-5 classrooms will receive chairs, desks, and other equipment designed to let students move their bodies while taking part in lessons. Other classrooms will serve as a control. The Katherine Matthies Foundation has provided additional funding for the equipment.

Shelton: "Fittest of the Valley" Competition (Shelton High School) - All students will be invited to compete in, and win prizes for, activities that align with state and national fitness test components. The first competition was held in November 2017. The second one will take place in the spring.

Shelton: Kids Marathon Program (Booth Hill Elementary School) - A before-school program will take place 2 times per week for 12 weeks. Participating students will walk or run 1 mile each time. At the end of the program, they will walk or run a 5K, thus completing the equivalent of a full marathon.

Shelton: "Recess Fun & Fitness" Project (Perry Hill School) - Equipment for active games (e.g. soccer balls, Frisbees, basketballs, hula hoops, etc.) will be purchased for use by all students during recess.

### **UPDATE – Community Health Opportunities Organized with Schools at the Epicenter (CHOOSE)**

Our core research project for this 5-year CDC funding cycle expands within/beyond VITAHLS school districts to include other health promotion "portals" as well in their respective communities.

- **Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program** – The PRC has partnered with Wholesome Wave®, a Bridgeport-based non-profit, to pilot test an adaptation of its Fruit & Vegetable Prescription program, which has been offered elsewhere in clinical settings. As part of CHOOSE, we are offering this program in a worksite "portal" targeted to Griffin Hospital employees, and examining its impact on participants' fruit and vegetable purchases/intake, diet quality, and health-related outcomes. The goal is to randomly assign 60 participants to one of two groups: fruit & vegetable prescription program (30 participants) or control/no intervention (30 participants). Those in the fruit & vegetable program receive advice and tips to eat more fruits and vegetables, offered through a set of 10 skill-building educational sessions (45 minutes each), along with financial incentives (coupons/vouchers) to buy fruits and vegetables. The sessions focus on delicious, nutritious, affordable, simple and quick meal preparation. They are led by a multidisciplinary team including a chef/instructor, nutritionist, preventive medicine physician, and PRC staff. All participants receive a \$50 gift card at each of the 3 assessment time points. As of January 2018, we have completed the intervention phase and pre/post assessments for our initial cohort of 42 participants (21 intervention, 21 control). For more information, contact Ms. Rockiy Ayettey (email [rockiy.ayettey@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:rockiy.ayettey@yalegriffinprc.org), phone 203-732-1265 ext. 300).

### **NOW RECRUITING! A Randomized, Placebo-Controlled Study of Mindfulness Meditation in Treating Insomnia in Multiple Sclerosis**

- **Study details:** The State of CT Biomedical Research Trust Fund has provided funding to Griffin Hospital for research on Multiple Sclerosis, and the PRC is partnering with Joseph Guarnaccia, MD, Director of the Multiple Sclerosis Treatment Center at Griffin Hospital, to develop and conduct this research. This study will examine whether Mindfulness Meditation Treatment for Insomnia is more effective than sleep hygiene counseling in treating insomnia and improving quality of life in MS patients. About 25%-40% of MS patients suffer from chronic insomnia, leading to daytime impairment. Treatments for MS and its symptoms may also contribute to insomnia. Medications to manage insomnia may have adverse effects such as dependence/tolerance, cognitive dysfunction, and depression. Therefore, it is desirable to find effective non-pharmacological treatments for insomnia in MS patients. One potential treatment involves mindfulness - focusing one's full attention on the present moment without judgment - which is hypothesized to increase awareness of and ability to tolerate thoughts and

emotions, which in turn can reduce perceived stress, anxiety, and pain. Prior research has shown some benefits of mindfulness in treating insomnia in general, and some benefits of stress reduction in managing MS-related insomnia. To date, however, there have been no studies on the efficacy of mindfulness in treating MS-related insomnia.

- **Who we're recruiting:** Men and women age 18 years or older who have been diagnosed with MS, and who have a history of chronic insomnia, but who do not have obstructive sleep apnea or narcolepsy. They must be willing to: (1) attend a clinical screening at Griffin Hospital; (2) attend counseling or educational sessions; and (3) take part in assessments, which will include clinical exams and surveys.
- **What will happen:** Each of the 90 adults who enrolls will be randomly assigned to one of two groups. One group will take part in 10 weekly sessions of mindfulness-based training for insomnia, held at either the Yale Stress Center in New Haven, or at Griffin Hospital. The other group will attend a sleep hygiene training session at Griffin Hospital (with tips for good sleeping habits and making sleep more efficient), and will be invited to attend a 2-hour mindfulness session after completing their role in the study. Members of both groups will wear Fitbits for several weeks to record their sleep data. At 3 time points, they will complete questionnaires and visit Griffin Hospital for clinical assessments.
- **Compensation:** Participants will be compensated a total of \$200 over the duration of this study. All study visits and interventions, including mindfulness sessions, will be free of charge.
- **How to apply:** If you or someone you know is interested in participating, contact Sue Acheychek by email at [susan.acheychek@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:susan.acheychek@yalegriffinprc.org), or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 220, or Ms. Rockiy Ayettey by email at [rockiy.ayettey@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:rockiy.ayettey@yalegriffinprc.org) or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 300.

### **UPDATE – Community Alliance for Research and Engagement**

The Community Alliance for Research and Engagement (CARE) extends the PRC's work with a mission to improve health in New Haven, CT. CARE, in partnership with the New Haven community, is working in tandem with the PRC to take action against chronic diseases and other challenges that threaten the health of community members. For more information, contact Alycia Santilli at [santillia1@southernct.edu](mailto:santillia1@southernct.edu).

- **The State of Hunger in New Haven**  
CARE teamed with the New Haven Food Policy Council and community partners to write a report that assesses food security issues in New Haven and make policy recommendations for the City of New Haven. Alycia Santilli, MSW, Director of CARE, and Kathleen O'Connor Duffany, PhD, Director of Research and Evaluation at CARE, co-authored the report with community partners. The goal is to translate the analysis and recommendations set forth in the report into policy changes that improve and even eliminate the food security issues experienced by many New Haven residents. The report indicates that across New Haven, 22% of residents are food insecure. This rate of food insecurity exceeds the Connecticut rate of 12% and the national rate of 13%. Food insecurity varies widely in New Haven, impacting 1 in 3 adults in low-income neighborhoods. Within the low-income neighborhoods, Hispanic and Latinx communities reported an even higher food insecurity rate of 50%. CARE will continue to work closely with the New Haven Food Policy Council to address hunger.
- **Health Leadership Program in New Haven**  
CARE has launched a leadership program for New Haven residents and SCSU graduate students to work together on solutions to pressing social and health issues identified by the community. Residents work alongside student and faculty partners to build relationships with neighborhood leaders and community organizations in implementing health activities and initiatives. In the coming months, CARE looks forward to sharing updates about further developments with this program.

***Grant Proposals and Awards***

## **RECENTLY-SUBMITTED PROPOSAL**

- ***Effects of Almond Consumption in the Context of Different Dietary Patterns on Satiety, Body Composition, Diet Quality, & Cardio-Metabolic Risk Factors in Adults at Risk for Type 2 Diabetes***

The PRC has sent a pre-proposal the Almond Board of California for a study to examine the effects of consuming almonds as part of a healthy diet in adults at risk for Type 2 diabetes. About 86 million people in the U.S., are estimated to have pre-diabetes, 15-30% of whom are likely to develop Type 2 diabetes with 5 years. Many overweight and obese people show signs of insulin resistance and are at increased risk of Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD). CVD mortality rates are 2 to 4 times higher among adults with diabetes, compared to those without diabetes. Almonds have a low glycemic index (ability to raise blood glucose), and are rich in nutrients - including monounsaturated fats - that are vital to improve cardio-metabolic risk factors in those at risk for Type 2 diabetes. In addition, almonds are satiating foods with the potential to reduce caloric intake and improve weight control. The DASH Diet, which has tied with the Mediterranean Diet as U.S. News & World Reports' best overall diet for 2018, provides flexible guidelines for selecting from a wide variety of healthy foods - including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, healthy fats, lean proteins, and low-fat dairy - and recommends avoiding foods that are processed, packaged, or high in saturated fats. We propose a randomized controlled trial to examine the impact of including almonds, as compared with their exclusion, in the context of a DASH or habitual diet, on satiety (acute phase), and over a 3-month period (sustained phase) on cardio-metabolic risk measures, in adults who are at risk for Type 2 diabetes, along with their impact on diet quality. We will also investigate whether including almonds in DASH diets, when compared to the inclusion of almonds in habitual diets, will confer further benefits on cardio-metabolic risk factors for our study participants.

## ***Presentations***

**David Katz, MD, MPH, FACPM, FACP**, PRC Director, delivered the following presentations:

- *Knowing What to Eat, Refusing to Swallow It* on October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the University of Jacksonville in Jacksonville, FL.
- Closing keynote address on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Food as Medicine Summit, held at Hunter College in New York, NY.

**Kim Doughty, MPH, PhD, VITAHLS Coordinator**, delivered the following workshop and presentation:

- VITAHLS goal-setting workshop on October 10<sup>th</sup> with representatives of six school districts (Ansonia, Derby, Naugatuck, Oxford, Seymour, and Shelton), at the Seymour Middle School in Seymour, CT.
- Update on VITAHLS activities on December 4<sup>th</sup> as part of the launch of the 2016-2018 Valley Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP), which took place at Griffin Hospital.

**Valentine Njike, MD**, PRC Assistant Director of Research & Evaluation, delivered a presentation on Childhood Obesity on December 15<sup>th</sup> to the Valley Chamber of Commerce Healthcare Council at Griffin Hospital in Derby, CT.

## ***Publications***

- Adams ML, Grandpre J, **Katz DL**, Shenson D. *Linear Association between Number of Modifiable Risk Factors and Multiple Chronic Conditions: Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System.* Prev Med. 2017 Dec;105:169-175.

- **Doughty KN**, Del Pilar NX, Audette A, **Katz DL**. *Lifestyle Medicine and the Management of Cardiovascular Disease*. Curr Cardiol Rep. 2017 Oct 4;19(11):116.
- Pett KD, Willett WC, Vartiainen E, **Katz DL**. *The Seven Countries Study*. Eur Heart J. 2017 Nov 7;38(42):3119-3121.

## *In-Service / Training Opportunities*

You are invited to join us at our **Journal Club meetings or other professional development sessions**, usually held every other month. We review and critique publications on topics such as community-based research, clinical research, and public health. This helps us stay up-to-date on research findings. It also allows us to examine publications (for the research questions, study design, results and conclusions) so we can apply the knowledge gained and lessons learned to the design of our own projects. Occasionally, we devote these sessions to reviewing recent findings from our own studies.

**Our next meeting will be held at the PRC on the second floor of Griffin Hospital.**

- **Tuesday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, from 2:00 to 3:00 p.m.**  
Keihner A, Rosen N, Wakimoto P, et al. *Impact of California Children's Power Play! Campaign on Fruit and Vegetable Intake and Physical Activity among Fourth- and Fifth-Grade Students*. Am J Health Promot. 2017 May;31(3):189-191

If you have questions, please contact Dr. Valentine Njike by email at [valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:valentine.njike@yalegriffinprc.org), or by phone at 203-732-1265 ext. 304.

## *Let's Stay in Touch*

We want to hear from you – let us know what you are doing and how our research might assist you in your work. Please contact Beth Comerford, MS, Deputy Director ([beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org](mailto:beth.comerford@yalegriffinprc.org)) or any of the staff listed in this **Newsflash**.

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The Yale-Griffin PRC is a member of the Prevention Research Centers Program.



***Healthier Communities Together***

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