Tanning, Tattooing, and Body Piercing: Separating the Myths from the Facts
Primary Care Clerkship - Community Project
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Introduction:
Teenagers engage in risky behaviors. The decision making capacity of the brain is still maturing in adolescence. Social and emotional interaction centers in the brain are still very active, making teens more susceptible to peer pressure. While part of the brain capable of controlling impulses and risky behavior reaches maturity until approximately 23 years of age. Combined these factors lead to higher rates of risk behaviors among teenagers from higher rates among populations who are not informed of the dangers to their health. However, risky behaviors occur at higher rates among populations who are not informed of the dangers to their health.

Project Goals:
1. Inform students about the risks of tanning, tattooing, and body piercing.
2. Help students separate the myths from the facts about their health.
3. Discourage high risk behaviors by encouraging informed decision making.
4. Provide a positive role model for high school students.

Project:
Teachers at two Appleton High schools made requests for a talk on tanning, tattooing, and piercing for their predominantly minority urban student body. The idea was to talk to the students about the risks of tanning, tattooing, and piercing for their health. Prior to the presentation, students took a 15 question pre-test asking them to identify whether the statement was a myth or fact. Students then completed a 15 question post-test, reviewing the myths and facts about the health risks, and a follow up question pre and post-test asking them to identify whether the statement was a myth or fact. Prior to the presentation, students took a 15 question pre-test asking them to identify whether the statement was a myth or fact. Students then completed a 15 question post-test, reviewing the myths and facts about the health risks, and a follow up question pre and post-test asking them to identify whether the statement was a myth or fact. Students then completed a 15 question post-test, reviewing the myths and facts about the health risks, and a follow up question pre and post-test asking them to identify whether the statement was a myth or fact.

Pre-Test Analysis: What do teens know about their health?

Questions about health risks:
1. Myth: Sunburns are a minor inconvenience.
   - Sunburns are not a minor inconvenience. Sunburns are a sign that the skin is exposed to UV rays, which can cause skin damage and increase the risk of skin cancer.

2. Myth: A burn is a burn.
   - Burns are not all the same. Different types of burns require different treatment. Sunburns are a type of heat burn. Heat burns are treated with cool, wet compresses and over-the-counter pain relievers.

3. Myth: A sunburn will not last forever.
   - A sunburn can last for days to weeks. The skin can be peeled and flaky. The skin can be itchy and painful. The skin can be more prone to sunburns in the future.

   - Sunburnt skin is not always red. It can be white, pale, or severely sunburned.

5. Myth: Sunscreen is not as effective in wet conditions.
   - Sunscreen is as effective in wet conditions as it is in dry conditions. Waterproof sunscreens are designed to be effective in wet conditions.

6. Myth: Sunscreen only works on fair skin.
   - Sunscreen works on all skin types. However, fair skin may need a higher SPF to protect against sunburn.

7. Myth: I only need sunscreen on days when I am outside.
   - Sunscreen should be applied every day, even on cloudy days. Clouds do not completely block UV rays.

8. Myth: I don’t need to use sunscreen if I’m wearing a hat or sunglasses.
   - Even with a hat or sunglasses, sunscreen is still necessary. UV rays can penetrate through the hat or sunglasses.

9. Myth: Sunscreen is not necessary in the winter.
   - Sunscreen is necessary in the winter. Even on snowy days, UV rays can still cause skin damage.

10. Myth: Sunscreen lasts 1 hour.
    - Sunscreen does not last 1 hour. It should be reapplied every 2 hours or after swimming or sweating.

Indoor Tanning:
- Myths: Indoor tanning is safer than outdoor tanning.
- Skin cancer affects older people, so I am not at risk now.
- Just a few sunburns prior to age 18 can double the chance of developing skin cancer.
- Even occasional use of tanning beds triples the risk of melanoma.

Wisconsin law bans indoor tanning under the age of 18.

Fact: Skin cancer kills one in four.
- Myth: Melanomas kill one in four.
- Sunscreen of SPF 15 or higher will help to protect you from sun damage.
- Myths: The protection from tanning is roughly equivalent to wearing SPF 15 sunscreen.

Tattooing:
- In Wisconsin, it is legal to get a tattoo at age 18, as long as I have parent permission.
- Myths: Must be 18 or older to get a tattoo in Wisconsin, unless懿 follows by a physician in the course of medical care. This law varies from state to state. (18.4% correct)
- Tattoos are only skin deep, so blood infections like HIV cannot be transmitted by tattooing. (96.3% correct)
- The pigment and dyes used in tattooing are FDA approved.
- Myths: None of the dyes or pigments used in tattooing are FDA approved. Some contain metallic pigments that can interfere with medical imaging (MRI).

Tattoo can be ruined by skin stretching that occurs with pregnancy or weight gain.

Fact: If I don’t like my tattoo, I can always get it removed by laser.
- Myth: Laser tattoo removal is expensive, painful, and does not always work.

Body Piercing:
- Body piercing can be done as an 18-year-old with parental consent.
- Myths: Must be 18 or older to pierce anyone other than the self. (16.2% correct)

Home body piercing is legal in Wisconsin and can be done by anyone.
- Myth: Body piercing cannot be done at home. It must be done by a licensed professional.

Piercing guns are safer than piercing tools.
- Myth: Piercing needles carry a lower risk of infection and other complications for body piercing.

Body piercing can be a lower overall health risk than tanning.
- Fact: (37.6% correct)

Body piercing carries the risk of an infection in the heart.
- Fact: Endocarditis is a new complication of piercing.

Challenges:
- When it comes to images, there is a fine line between appropriately depicting a disease and its risk behavior and improving student learning.
- The class was to be positive, encouraging, and engaging. The presentations involved significant amounts of storytelling, practice strategies for building rapport with adolescents while providing a positive role model in the classroom. The class was to improve upon student the dangers to their health without becoming just another peer group teaching them about health.
- The practice teaching minutes were to be used as an open forum inviting questions about the presentation, other health questions, as well as questions about college and their health.

Learning Points for a Medical Student:
- Learn valuable information about the health risks of tanning, tattooing, and piercing that can be applied to clinical counseling of patients.
- Gain a better understanding of the types of things that teens do and do not think about when it comes to their health.
- Better appreciation of the range of emotional, physical, and intellectual development present within a school grade level and the impact this has on the educational environment. It is very different to understand the theory of variability in timing and presentation of pubertal development when seeing an image of a 12-year-old boy who has yet to undergo puberty and to believe that he is being presented with the entire range of development in a single classroom.
- Reinforce respect for teachers and the role they play in the psychosocial development of children and adolescents.
- Practice strategies for building rapport with adolescents while also maintaining a position of authority.
- Gain confidence in being an active role model in the community.

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- Mom & Dad Stoel – for housing and feeding me during rotation
- Image credits: Google Image

Appleton East High School
Student Body: ~1500
Macost: Patriot
School Colors: Blue & Gold
Health Teacher: Mrs. Murphy

Appleton West High School
Student Body: ~1600
Macost: Schubbe
School Colors: Orange & Blue
Health Teacher: Mrs. Strec

A personal note:
Growing up in Appleton, I was a direct beneficiary of the safe and supportive educational environment provided by teachers and staff of the Appleton Area School District. Coming home for my primary care physician I knew I wanted to do more than just see patients. I wanted to give back to the community project with high school students, so my any day giving back to the community class that helped form me into the person I am today. When I found out that teachers at two high schools, in my own what I do, were talking to people who had just turned 18, I became inspired to ask questions. This was an open forum inviting questions about the presentation, other health questions, as well as questions about college and their health.

Appleton is a city of approximately 75,000 people located on the Fox River in Northern Wisconsin. It is the county seat of Outagamie county and the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county. It is the county seat of Outagamie county.