

**Background:** There is a need for information on the perceptions of health concerns from a local perspective since resource availability and behavior expectations differ widely by social structure and region. Cultural competency, such as accurate definitions of health and illness are an integral part of developing effective medical interventions and educational initiatives because they allow research to respond directly to public needs, misconceptions, or behavioral practices.

**Methods:** An initial pilot needs assessments conducted in the Coastal Ouest region of Haiti eluded to a belief that vaginal illness related to water quality was a major concern among community members. Since the relationship between water quality and feminine health is not reflected in the literature, follow-up research was conducted to better define the beliefs and behaviors associated with “vaginal illness” and “poor water quality” from a local perspective. Cultural perceptions of vaginal illness related to water quality were explored with maximum variability sampling among community members and key informants. Participants were selected based on diversity criteria including age, gender, socioeconomic status, occupation, and type/degree of medical training. Beliefs and themes surrounding vaginal illness and water quality were allowed to arise through open-ended, semi-structured interviews conducted with the use of qualified translators.

**Findings:** Results indicate that the perception exists among all (N=37) Haitian study participants that water is related to vaginal illness, with 81% (N=30) of Haitian participants expressing the belief that water is a direct cause of vaginal illness.

**Interpretation:** The current biomedical model does not support the claim that water is causally related to vaginal illness in Haiti. However, given the cultural and behavioral patterns associated with water use in Haiti this association cannot be immediately dismissed. The current research indicates that the additional monitoring of bathing water may be a justifiable public health concern in tracing the transmission of vaginal infections, though further research is needed to determine what if any, specific pathogens might frequently be transmitted through contact with contaminated bathing water.

**Source of Funding:** Dean Michael G. Perri, with the College of Public Health and Health Professions at the University of Florida.

**Abstract #:** 1.010\_NCD

### Association between Childhood Abuse and Health Risk Behaviors among Chinese College Students

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**Background:** Little is known about the link between child abuse and health risk behaviors among Chinese college students.

**Methods:** This cross-sectional study examined the prevalence of child abuse and its relations with individual and clusters of health risk behaviors among Chinese college students. A total of 507 students participated in this survey in Wuhan, China from April to May 2012. Six health risk behaviors were investigated among Chinese college students: internet addiction, self-harm behavior, suicidal behavior, current smoking, binge drinking, and risky sexual

behavior. Items were adapted from Youth Behavior Survey Questionnaire (YRBS) developed by the CDC in the USA and Young's Internet Addiction Test. Experiences of child abuse occurred before age 18 were measured by using *Childhood Trauma Questionnaire – Short Form (CTQ-SF)*, a well-validated retrospective self-report inventory.

**Findings:** The prevalence of child abuse from highest to lowest was emotional neglect (53.9%), physical neglect (49.0%), emotional abuse (21.8%), physical abuse (18.3%), and sexual abuse (18.1%), respectively. Males were more likely to report child abuse than females ( $p < 0.01$ ). For males, emotional abuse was associated with internet addiction (OR = 2.28; 95% CI: 1.00, 5.20) and suicidal behavior (OR = 12.47; 95% CI: 2.61, 59.54); while sexual abuse was associated with internet addiction (OR = 2.30; 95% CI: 1.14, 4.66). For females, emotional abuse was significantly associated with increased risks for self-harm behavior (OR = 15.03; 95% CI: 3.59, 63.07) and suicidal behavior (OR = 5.16; 95% CI: 1.63, 16.40). Physical abuse was related to risks for internet addiction (OR = 2.50; 95% CI: 1.03, 6.04) significantly. Two-step cluster analysis showed that participants in clusters with more health risk behaviors reported higher scores of child abuse.

**Interpretation:** Our study reveals significant association between child abuse and multiple health risk behaviors among Chinese college students. Our findings highlight the need for implementing effective education programs targeting parents to adopt the best parenting style to raise their children. Furthermore, it will be important to early identify and take interventions for college students to reduce the occurrence of unhealthy behaviors in this population.

**Source of Funding:** None.

**Abstract #:** 1.011\_NCD

### Pediatric Burn Injuries in Northern Laos

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**Background:** Burn injuries represent the third most common type of trauma experienced by the pediatric population and are a significant cause of pediatric mortality and lifelong disability worldwide. The current global burden of burn injuries is profoundly inequitable with low and middle-income countries (LMICs) carrying approximately 90% of total burn cases. The region of Southeast Asia carries the highest annual incidence of burn injuries at 243 per 100,000 population. Children in LMICs, like Laos, have been shown to be at higher risk of burn injuries- through flame burns or scalding. However, no research has been conducted on the patterns of pediatric burn injuries in Laos to date. The main objective of this study is to describe patterns and understand trends among pediatric patients treated for burn injuries in Northern Laos.

**Methods:** This retrospective chart review was carried out at the Lao Friends Hospital for Children in Luang Prabang, Lao PDR. Each child's medical record was reviewed for demographic features, mechanism of burn, and duration of hospital stay. The chi-square test was used to analyze associations between two categorical