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## **Promoting Heart Healthy Behaviors in Adolescents at the Boys and Girls Club**

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## **Promoting Heart Healthy Behaviors in Adolescents at the Boys and Girls Club**

### **Project Summary**

The prevalence of elevations in blood pressure has emerged as a serious health concern in children, adolescents, and adults in the U.S. Pediatric hypertension occurs in 2-5% of the child population and is one of the top five chronic diseases in children and adolescents. Persistent blood pressure in children and adolescents can extend into adulthood and increase cardiovascular risk such as stroke and heart disease. The National, Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) provided a summary report of guidelines for cardiovascular health and risk reduction in children and adolescents that outlined increase in physical activity and better nutritional options. Given that heart disease is the leading cause of death in the U.S., it is crucial to understand early risk factors such as blood pressure elevations in adolescents. Therefore, it would be important to determine blood pressure measurements within this population, particularly those who are ages 12-18 years-old. In addition, it would be essential to assess adolescents' current knowledge of heart healthy habits and help adolescents to incorporate those healthy behaviors as part of their daily lives.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this project is two-fold: 1) determine blood pressure of adolescents, ages 12-18 years-old, and 2) create a teaching resource manual to promote heart healthy behaviors in this age group at a local Boys and Girls Club. This project seeks a student who has some skills and knowledge in blood pressure assessments and is enrolled in the honors program.

**Learning objectives of the student (duties):**

- 1) The student will review the available literature (peer-reviewed sources) and discuss published information with regard to blood pressure and its effects on the body.
- 2) The student will create a pre-test to assess current knowledge (sleep, physical activity levels, and nutritional behaviors) of adolescents.
- 3) The student will develop a teaching resource manual for the adolescents (participants) and present to the adolescents and administrators of the Boys and Girls Club.
- 4) The student will administer a post-test to assess adolescents' knowledge after the teaching session(s).

**Expected results**

The expected results from this project are for the student to determine blood pressure measurements in adolescents ages 12-18 years-old. The goal is to create a teaching resource manual that focuses on heart healthy behaviors, and for the student to present this information to the adolescents, staff, and administrators of the Boys and Girls Club. This teaching resource manual may be used at the local Boys and Girls Club and potentially across other area organizations.

**Supervision**

Faculty mentor will supervise and interact with the student 1-2 times on a weekly basis and will facilitate the development of a teaching resource manual to be used at the Boys and Girls Club. Faculty mentor will schedule in-person meetings, phone meetings, and check in at the Boys and Girls Club to monitor the student's progression of the project. Faculty mentor will meet with the administrators at the Boys and Girls Club to ensure that the student has developed a professional, working relationship with the staff and adolescents.