

Nurses' Health Study Seeks New Generation of Participants

Researchers are currently recruiting 100,000 nurses and nursing students to join the long-running Nurses' Health Study and expand its landmark research on women's health. Female RNs, licensed practical nurses, and nursing students ages 20 to 46 who live in the United States or Canada are eligible to join the study. Researchers hope to engage a highly diverse group of women in the "next generation" of the study, and for the first time, nursing students are eligible to enroll.



More than 25,000 women have signed up already, and recruitment will stay open until the goal of 100,000 participants is reached. To make participation as convenient as possible for busy women, participants can join online and complete the study's surveys through a secure website, <http://www.nhs3.org>.

More than 250,000 nurses have participated in the study since the 1970s. By completing confidential lifestyle surveys, they have helped advance medical knowledge about nutrition, exercise, cancer, heart disease, and many other conditions.

Source: "Nurses Wanted: Largest Women's Health Study Seeks 100,000 Nurses." (2012, February 21). Retrieved March 1, 2012, from <http://www.pnewsire.com/news-releases/nurses-wanted-largest-womens-health-study-seeks-100000-nurses-139830713.html>.

Study Examines Youth with Gender Identity Disorder

The first study to characterize a cohort of U.S. children with diagnosed gender identity disorder documents significant mental health risks as children struggle with strong feelings of being born "in the wrong body."

The study, published in *Pediatrics*, reviewed the charts of 97 consecutive patients who were seen at Children's Hospital Boston from 1998 through early 2010 and met *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, fourth edition, criteria for gender identity disorder: a strong, persistent identification as being of the opposite sex (transgendered) and significant distress and discomfort with one's biological sex.

Of these patients, who first came to the hospital at an average age of

14.8, 44% had a history of psychiatric symptoms, 37% were taking psychotropic medications, 21% had a history of self-mutilation, and 9% had attempted suicide.

Fifty-eight percent received a medical intervention. This consisted of opposite-sex hormones (to develop



a physical appearance closer to the affirmed gender) for the majority who were in later stages of puberty, and

puberty-suppressing drugs for the few children still in early puberty.

The researchers call for further study to assess these adolescents' psychological well-being after both kinds of treatment. They urge early evaluation for children who show persistent gender-related issues, including consultation with mental health professionals and consideration of medical treatment when patients near puberty. Anecdotally, children who receive interventions early do better psychologically.

Source: "Children with Gender Identity Disorder Are at Serious Psychiatric Risk." (2012, February 20). Retrieved March 1, 2012, from <http://www.pnewsire.com/news-releases/children-with-gender-identity-disorder-are-at-serious-psychiatric-risk-139668563.html>.

Alcohol Intervention Program Receives Praise

The National Registry of Evidence-based Programs and Practices (NREPP), a project of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), has given the TIPS for the University training program high marks for both quality and effectiveness. TIPS for the University is a 2-hour program that helps students make sound choices when faced with difficult decisions about alcohol use.

NREPP is one way that SAMHSA is working to improve access to information about model programs and thereby reduce the lag time between the development of scientific knowledge and its practical application in the field. The NREPP requirements are:

- The intervention has demonstrated positive behavioral outcome in the areas of mental health or substance use among individuals, communities, or populations.
- Evidence of these outcomes has been demonstrated in at least one study using an experimental or quasi-experimental design.

- The results of any such studies have been published in a peer-reviewed journal—or other publication—or documented in a comprehensive evaluation report.

- Implementation materials, training and support resources, and quality assurance procedures have been developed and are ready for use by the public.

Working together with other students and administrators at their college or university, students address drinking behaviors specific to their school and develop intervention techniques appropriate to their campus. All sessions are taught by certified TIPS trainers, using video and printed materials to facilitate discussion of the course content. TIPS for the University provides students with the knowledge and confidence necessary to reduce high-risk drinking behavior among their peers. More than 1,200 campuses nationwide have implemented TIPS for the University.

Source: "Alcohol Education Program Receives High Marks from SAMHSA." (2012, February 2). Retrieved March 1, 2012, from <http://www.pnewsire.com/news-releases/alcohol-education-program-receives-high-marks-from-samhsa-138559109.html>.

Family Check-Up Keeps Adolescents Out of Trouble

When parents of middle school students participate in school-based, family interventions, it can reduce problem behavior, according to research released in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*.

The transition to adolescence can be particularly challenging, as during this period, children are more likely to engage in potentially harmful behavior with their peers while having less monitoring from and communication with their parents. The researchers were interested in whether an intervention called the Family Check-Up (FCU)—a short program that provides feedback and skill training for parents—could mitigate some of the troubles many parents and teens face.

The researchers followed 593 seventh and eighth graders and their families in a randomized controlled trial, with families assigned either to participate in the FCU program or to a control group of "school as usual" students at three public schools in the Pacific Northwest. The researchers gathered data primarily from students' self-reports to provide a broad assessment of family interaction. Researchers also videorecorded parents interacting with their teens at home and school. Both parents and teens received comprehensive feedback about their interaction with each other.

Significant intervention effects were noted on all four outcomes—family conflict, parental monitoring, antisocial behavior, and alcohol use. In addition, one of the program's strengths is its short duration; the average participating family received approximately 4.5 hours of intervention time.

The research team says the study findings are a reminder that adolescence is not a time for parents to pull back on involvement in their children's lives and should know where their teens are, have curfew rules, and make their values and wishes explicit regarding teen drinking, substance use, and sex.

Source: "Teens Have Fewer Behavioral Issues When Parents Stay Involved." (2012, January 27). Retrieved March 1, 2012, from <http://www.newswise.com/articles/teens-have-fewer-behavioral-issues-when-parents-stay-involved>.

Possible Link Between Anesthesia & ADHD Studied

Mayo Clinic researchers have found that multiple exposures to anesthesia at a young age are associated with higher rates of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). Children exposed to two or more anesthetic agents before age 3 had more than double the incidence of ADHD than children who had no exposure, according to research published in the *Mayo Clinic Proceedings*.

Basic science studies in the medical literature that suggest anesthesia used in surgery causes changes in the brains of young animals piqued the researchers' interest.

The study used results of an existing epidemiological study that looked at educational records of children born between 1976 and 1982 in Rochester, Minnesota, and determined those who developed some form of learning disability or ADHD. Among 341 cases of ADHD in those younger than 19, researchers traced medical



records in the Rochester Epidemiology Project, a decades-long database of all patient care in Olmsted County, Minnesota, looking for exposure to anesthesia and surgery before age 3.

Children who had no exposure to anesthesia and surgery had ADHD at a rate of 7.3%. The rate after a single exposure to anesthesia and surgery was approximately the same. For children who had two or more exposures to anesthesia and surgery, the rate of ADHD was 17.9%, even after researchers adjusted for other factors, including gestational age, sex, birth weight, and comorbid health conditions.

The results of the study, however, do not definitively mean that anesthesia causes ADHD, and further investigation is warranted, the research team noted.

Source: "Young Children Exposed to Anesthesia Multiple Times Show Elevated Rates of ADHD." (2012, January 26). Retrieved March 8, 2012, from <http://www.mayoclinic.org/news2012-1st/6678.html>.

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