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Georgia Southern Examines the Impact of State HAI Reporting Laws

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Robust evidence regarding the effect of mandatory health care–associated infection (HAI) reporting is increasingly important to policy makers. The objective of the study was to examine the effect of mandated state HAI reporting laws on central line–associated bloodstream infection (CLABSI) rates in adult intensive care units (ICUs).

We analyzed 2006–2012 adult ICU CLABSI and hospital annual survey data from the National Healthcare Safety Network. The final analytic sample included 244 hospitals, 947 hospital years, 475 ICUs, 1,902 ICU years, and 16,996 ICU months. We used a quasi-experimental study design to identify the effect of state mandatory reporting laws. Several secondary models were conducted to explore potential explanations for the plausible effects of HAI laws.

Our results provide valuable evidence that state reporting requirements for HAIs improved care. Additional studies are needed to further explore why and how mandatory HAI reporting laws decreased CLABSI rates.


Dr. Julie Reagan, Assistant Professor of Health Policy and Management at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was one of the co-authors of the study.
Georgia Southern Protects Swimmer Health in Coastal Georgia

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Population density in coastal environments are rapidly increasing worldwide, and Coastal Georgia is no different. These environmental areas are extremely sensitive to pollution and impacts from the everyday life of the individuals living or visiting these environments. One of the main concerns of a growing population in the coastal environment is the occurrence of waterborne pathogens and their impact on public health.

The Water Quality Research Group in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University (JPHCOPH GSU) has been investigating the occurrence of waterborne pathogens in the beaches of Coastal Georgia.

Georgia has been using guidelines that suggest a single sample maximum of 104 CFU/100 ml for enterococci; however, recent epidemiological studies suggest a lower value for advisory decisions. The Recreational Water Quality Criteria (RWQC) has been readjusted based on these new studies and, starting in Jan. 2016, Georgia adopted the new RWQC with a "beach action value" of 70 CFU/100 ml.

The Water Quality Research Group at the GSU Public Health Core Laboratory has been testing Tybee Island beaches since 2014. That year, the beaches were issued with four advisories total, using the 104 CFU/100 ml single sample maximum value.

When the researchers applied the new 70 CFU/100 ml value, they retrospectively found the number of advisories doubled. This beach action value decrease to 70 CFU/100 ml is a critical step in beach monitoring programs, because the change allows for better prevention from waterborne diseases and protection of Georgia's swimmer health.

Coastal Georgia and, in particular, Tybee Island beaches are fortunate to have minimum issues of microbial contamination. With the adoption of the new beach action value, Georgia's beaches will be even safer for everyone.

"Protecting Swimmer Health in Coastal Georgia," was published in the June 2016 issue of Georgia Environmentalist.

Dr. Asli Aslan, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Services at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University was the author of this study.
Georgia Southern Examines the Effectiveness of a Physical Activity Educational Campaign

September 14, 2016

Research links gestational obesity to adverse effects on offspring, including prematurity and subsequent childhood obesity. Even though physical activity (PA) is highly recommended prior to and throughout pregnancy by organizations such as the ACOG, women often receive little information from health care providers regarding the amount of PA required for continued health benefits. This study investigated the effectiveness of a health education campaign to increase PA knowledge, intention, and behavior among prenatal women and women of reproductive age in a rural healthcare setting located in the Southeastern United States with positive results.

The study was conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of an early intervention health education campaign to positively influence PA knowledge, intention, and performance among prenatal women and women of reproductive age. In conclusion, physical activity educational campaigns are a cost effective intervention that can be implemented in healthcare settings to promote maternal and child health.

The Effectiveness of a Physical Activity Educational Campaign in a Rural Obstetrics and Gynecology Office," was featured in Maternal Child Health Journal on June 25, 2016.

Dr. Bridget Melton, Department of Health and Kinesiology at Georgia Southern University was the lead author and Dr. Helen Bland, Professor of Community Health Behavior Education at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health Georgia Southern University was one of the co-authors.
Georgia Southern examines impact of new water quality criteria on beach advisories in coastal Georgia

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To monitor pollution of marine beaches in Georgia, enterococci have been used as indicators of fecal contamination. For the 1986 Recreational Water Quality Criteria (RWQC), the beach action value (BAV) was 104 colony forming units (CFU)/100 ml; the new RWQC, instituted in 2012, is 70 CFU/mL, a 32.6% decrease. When the beach action value is reached, authorities are to issue a beach advisory for protection of swimmer health. The present study investigated changes in compliance with the 2012 RWQC at five high-use beaches in Georgia.

In the summer of 2015, samples of water were collected from five beaches at Tybee Island. Enterococci concentrations were enumerated by USEPA-approved methods. Samples exceeding the 1986 and 2012 RWQC beach action values were compared with times that advisories were posted at these beaches.

At these beaches, advisories were posted four times during the summer. Since, in 2015, the previous RWQC was in use, these decisions were based on the guideline value of 104 colony-forming units (CFU)/100 ml. When the new beach action value (70 CFU/100 ml) was applied, retrospectively, for samples collected at these sites, researchers found that the number of advisories would have been doubled if this value had been in place at that time.

One other issue that is often overlooked in water quality monitoring is the day of the sampling that is most representative for human exposure. In this study, researchers showed that only short term advisories were in agreement with routine week-day monitoring results. When the advisories were longer than 3 days, the weekend concentrations of bacteria were not always in agreement with the weekday results.

Staring from January 2016, Georgia has adopted new water quality criteria to monitor beaches. Decreasing the beach action value to 70 CFU/100 ml strengthens beach monitoring programs because it allows for better prevention from waterborne diseases, thus protecting the health of swimmers.


Dr. Asli Aslan, Assistant Professor of Environmental Health Services at the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health at Georgia Southern University was the lead author and recent alum, Sara Benevente was the co-author of this study.
Georgia Southern develops and conducts psychometric testing of a childhood obesity perception survey

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Caregivers can play a vital role in preventing childhood obesity and its health outcomes provided they have accurate obesity perceptions and engage in prevention strategies such as exercising with their child and providing well-balanced meals. Currently, public health practitioners are analyzing the role that caregivers play in childhood obesity efforts. Assessing African American caregiver’s perceptions of childhood obesity in rural communities is an important prevention effort.

This article’s objective is to describe the development and psychometric testing of a survey tool to assess childhood obesity perceptions among African American caregivers in a rural setting, which can be used for obesity prevention program development or evaluation. The Childhood Obesity Perceptions (COP) survey was developed to reflect the multidimensional nature of childhood obesity including risk factors, health complications, weight status, built environment, and obesity prevention strategies. The COP survey represents a promising approach as a potentially comprehensive assessment for implementation or evaluation of childhood obesity programs.

"Development and psychometric testing of the childhood obesity perceptions (COP) survey among African American caregivers: A tool for obesity prevention program planning," was published online August 8, 2016 in Evaluation and Program Planning.

Dr. Dayna S. Alexander, recent alum of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health (JPHCOPH) was the lead author and Dr. Moya Alfonso, Associate Professor of Community Health Behavior and Education at JPHCOPH at Georgia Southern University was one of the co-authors.