Abstract:

Introduction: Cardiovascular disease (CVD) remains the leading cause of death in the United States. Young men are particularly at risk for developing CVD. Data from numerous studies have provided evidence that lifestyle factors play an important role in the risk for developing CVD. Young adult men in college may be at high risk for future CVD due to engaging in
unhealthy lifestyle behaviors that potentially continue through adulthood. However, the attitudes and beliefs regarding cardiovascular health have not been fully explored in this population. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore cardiovascular health beliefs of young adult males in college.

Method(s): We conducted a qualitative descriptive study with a purposive sample of 10 undergraduate males in college. We performed semi-structured, individual interviews that were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and analyzed for themes.

Results: The data reflected four primary themes regarding factors related to cardiovascular health: cardiovascular health and lifestyle factors, the challenges of being a healthy college student, choosing not to think about long-term risk, and past health behaviors. Participants emphasized the importance of proper diet and physical activity and discussed how family history influences the risk for CVD. Perceived challenges of living healthy while in college include an excess of poor food choices, time constraints, convenience, and social influences. Participants also discussed how habits and being former athletes influenced their current health.

Discussion & Conclusions: Clinicians may need to emphasize the immediate health risks of a behavior when interacting with young men in college. Future research should focus on quantifying how health behaviors in college influence the immediate and long-term risks for cardiovascular disease.

Abstract History: This abstract has not been presented or accepted for presentation in whole or in part at the SNRS or other scientific meeting.

Financial Disclosure: No, I (or a member of my immediate family) have not received something of value* from or own stock (or stock options) in a commercial company or institution related directly or indirectly to the subject of my presentation.

FDA Disclosure: I will not be describing any pharmaceutical and/or medical device.

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