

Four Health Behaviors Study

*David Weigle PhD;>Sandra Burge, PhD. Four Health Risk Behaviors in Family Medicine Patients: Correlates of Interest in Change. **Annual Scientific Assembly, American Academy of Family Physicians** Washington DC, September 2006*

Background: Four health behaviors have a large influence on population health: smoking, alcohol misuse, physical inactivity, and diet.

Objective: In this study, we sought to examine prevalence of unhealthy behaviors in family medicine patients and examine predictors of patients' interest in change.

Methods: In 2006, the Residency Research Network of Texas (RRNeT) surveyed 1171 patients to determine patients' health behaviors, interest in change, and health and demographic correlates. We examined four groups of patients: smokers, "unsafe" drinkers, overweight inactive people, and overweight people with unhealthy diets.

Results: Across four health behaviors, age, health status, and ethnic background had consistent and significant influence on patients' interest in healthy change. Seniors were less interested in change, while minorities and people with ill health were more interested.

Conclusion: Older age can be a barrier, but ill health can motivate people toward positive change. The interest in behavior change among minority patients suggests that physicians should tailor motivational messages to be consistent with patients' cultural traditions and values.