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RAPS - Student level outcomes of a positive youth development intervention to put public health data into action

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Background

The Risk/Resiliency Assessment Project for Students (RAPS) uses a positive youth development¹ approach to engage students directly in the analysis and reporting of their school's 2011 NM-YRRS data.

Methods

Participants were 35 high school students from two Albuquerque area high schools who attended a day-long project retreat. Survey metrics included pre/post tests for critical health literacy, participant sense of community engagement, and pre/post assessment of student self-efficacy and civic attitudes. Survey items were derived from *The Measure of Service Learning: Research Scales to Assess Student Experiences*.²

Statistical Analysis

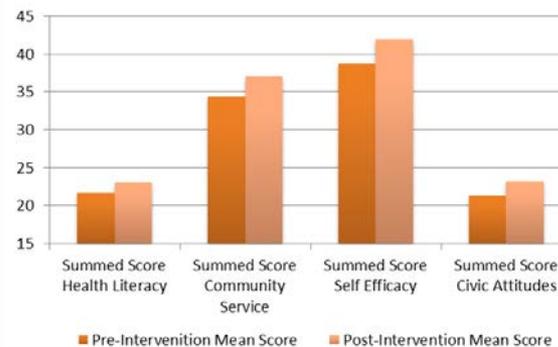
Reliability analyses were performed on the survey instrument in this student population by calculating Wilcoxon sign rank (WSR) tests and Cronbach alpha coefficients for each construct. Descriptive statistics were calculated to summarize the participant characteristics. Fisher exact tests performed on categorical data. Paired t-tests were used to assess the change scores (post- minus pre-test scores) within each construct. Multiple linear regression on the construct change scores was applied to determine whether participant characteristics affected the outcomes. Significance was held at $\alpha=0.05$. Analysis was performed in SAS 9.3.



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Results

The survey instrument was found to be reliable in this population (all Cronbach alphas >0.80 ; all WSR tests $p<0.05$). There were no significant differences between school sites and gender and grade of participants, while almost all Native American students came from NACA and all but one Hispanic student came from Rio Grande ($p<0.0001$).



Change scores for each construct from pre- to post-intervention were statistically significant (all $p<0.0001$). After adjusting for patient characteristics, boys had a significant improvement in Health Literacy scores where girls did not.

Conclusions

The RAPS project puts NM-YRRS data into the hands of youth, and supports them as they analyze the data and share their findings with their school and community. RAPS uses a positive youth development approach, which emphasizes the many strengths of young people, and is focused on enhancing the skills and strengths of youth to promote healthy behavioral development. Student-level outcomes of this project included improved health literacy, increased sense of community engagement and civic attitudes, and improved self-efficacy among participating youth. RAPS not only allowed adults to better understand contexts surrounding youth health, but also provided an opportunity to improve individual outcomes for participating students.

References

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