Webinar on the Family Life, Activity, Sun, Health, and Eating (FLASHE) Study:
A Resource for Understanding Cancer-Prevention Behavior
Among Parent-Adolescent Dyads

cancercontrol.cancer.gov/flashe

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Are there are any plans to expand beyond diet and physical activity to other cancer-related risk factors such as HPV vaccinations to further expand upon cancer- preventive behaviors among the dyads?

A. We started this study as a single point-in-time assessment and are in the process of evaluating the study's findings. However, we are continuing to review this area and are exploring future expansion in other potential areas of influence on cancer-preventive behaviors, such as other relationships/dyads and covariates that could be influencing cancer-preventive behaviors. Everything is always considered against the funding cycle and availability of funding. We would appreciate and will consider input from this community as part of our developmental phase for any future survey or study design. We're also considering a more longitudinal type of study.

Q. Is every aspect of the FLASHE data now publicly available and if not, what is the timeline for release?

A. The adolescent and parent diet survey data as well as the adolescent and parent demographic data are available for free download on the study webpage. We plan to release the physical activity survey data from both parents and adolescents in August 2017. We also plan to make some computed variables from the FLASHE motion study available later this year. Please subscribe for updates at cancercontrol.cancer.gov/brpsubscribe or email us at nciflashe@nih.gov.

Q. For practitioners, how can initial results from the FLASHE study be utilized in advocating for healthy nutrition and active living policies?

A. FLASHE is a government-funded and sponsored survey that is publicly available to researchers as well as advocates. We are hoping that everyone will go to the website after this webinar and review the dyadic data analysis video, the data users guide (available on the FLASHE data resource page, which is accessible after signing a terms of use), the surveys, and links to FLASHE-related papers in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine.

By reviewing these resources, you can get a sense of how to analyze the data and explore your own research questions, which may or not be related to healthy nutrition and active living policies. There are certainly numerous opportunities and avenues to explore. FLASHE data are particularly suited for those who are interested in how environments are associated with healthy behaviors. We encourage researchers to explore the data questions that may be related to some of these topics and how that work contributes to a broader

scientific understanding of health behavior and behavior change as well as the role of environment. As you do that work, we really encourage you to disseminate your findings and work with advocates on translation.

For advocates and practitioners, we encourage you to use the survey items available on the website. Some of you might be doing evaluation studies at the local level, and others might be looking at how certain behaviors or certain aspects of the environment are evaluated. Two new papers might be useful in reviewing some initial findings from FLASHE. One is a survey paper that looks at the relationship between sugar sweetened beverages and advertising. The second paper looks at the local availability of resources to support physical activity. These papers review the environmental influences that impact behavior, such as advertising, communication, and the local physical environment. They also look at some of the potential mechanisms and ways they can influence behavior. These findings might be important for people who are communicating with policymakers about the role of the environment or people communicating about how to maintain or promote behavior change.

Q. Is permission required to use the FLASHE data set?

A. The data sets are available on the webpage. You will need to digitally sign a terms of use agreement to access the data sets, but permission from staff is not required nor do you need to email us a research or analytics plan.

Q. Can you briefly describe or discuss the methods used to assess the community or neighborhood environment and more deeply describe the physical and social characteristics of the neighborhoods that were assessed?

A. There were several neighborhood-related questions included in the adolescent and parent surveys. In the FLASHE survey, the neighborhood questions asked parents and adolescents to consider their neighborhoods as anything within a 10- to 15-minute walk from home or school. The physical characteristics assessed among adolescents and parents included accessibility of stores, transportation, sidewalks, and recreational facilities in the neighborhood such as exercise facilities, walking trails or a sports field. They were also asked whether traffic was a potential barrier to walking outside. In the diet survey, participants were asked to report the type of food sources available within that 10- to 15-minute walk. Parents reported on the home neighborhood and adolescents on the neighborhood around the school. They also reported whether there were convenience or corner stores, supermarkets, fruit and vegetable markets, fast food restaurants, and non-fast food restaurants. Parents and adolescents were asked whether perceived crime was a barrier to walking in one's home neighborhood. Parents also reported on a few items on neighborhood social capital. For example, one item was about whether people in the neighborhood help each other out.

Q. How did you determine which measures to use for physical activity and diet?

A. Content domain leaders within NCI first discussed the purpose, aims and challenges with FLASHE, conducted informal literature reviews and consulted with extramural scientists –

many of whom were members of the National Collaborative on Childhood Obesity Research (NCCOR) and the American Public Health Association (APHA). NCI ultimately enlisted Greg Welk and his team of experts in physical activity measurement. We knew different measures of physical activity would be required to assess adults as well as teens, but we wanted to be able to harmonize on certain outcomes, particularly moderate to vigorous physical activity. For adults, we decided to use short IPAQ because it met our criteria for brevity, reliability, and suitability for web-based delivery. It also harmonized with our teen measure, the Youth Activity Profile (YAP). We wanted to include walking, but there were other efforts such as Step-It-Up that were specifically looking at walking, so we wanted FLASHE to be responsive to that. We recognized that recall measures are problematic for adolescents, especially younger adolescents, beyond one day. Indeed, we found that several iterations of the three-day physical activity recall did not work very well. We therefore enlisted the help of Greg Welk and his team at Iowa State University to work on the accelerometer portion of the study. We developed calibration methods because even though the YAP had a history, the FLASHE YAP was an adaptation of that, so we wanted to have specific calibration algorithms for it as well. Similar to the adult survey, we also wanted to have our survey provide data about different domains of physical activity that are relevant to children such as active transport, activity during the school day etc.

We followed a similar protocol in the dietary assessment tools. We looked at what was available and published in the literature, we worked with external experts and associations to gather input, and we looked at research on the validity of certain areas of questions in dietary screening. We worked with Amy Yaroch from the Gretchen Swanson Center for Nutrition to finalize the questions that were included in the dietary survey questionnaire. Those materials and questions are available on our website. The sources of those questions were validated and many of them cognitively tested.

Q. When will the physical activity data be available? Will there be an opportunity to look at sedentary behavior as well?

A. We plan to release the physical activity survey data from both parents and adolescents around August 2017. Those surveys include physical activity behavior questions and computed variables, and there are also some sedentary behavior items as well. For example, parents and adolescents answered a checklist of electronic devices used, and sedentary behavior for adolescents is also included within the Youth Activity Profile. Those items, and anything that was assessed as part of the physical activity survey, will be available in full online.

Q. Will data on tanning/sun safety, sleep, and tobacco use also be available?

A. Yes, data on tanning/sun safety as well as sleep and tobacco use behaviors are grouped together on the physical activity survey and those variables will be released with the physical activity survey data release.

Q. What are some of limitations of the FLASHE study? Are there areas or questions that cannot be answered using the FLASHE data set?

A. FLASHE is a cross-sectional, single point-in-time assessment, so you cannot use the data to report on trends or changes in behavior over a period of time. This is a national sample, but it is not a nationally representative sample like you would see in surveys such as National Health and Nutritional Examination Survey (NHANES), National Health Interview Survey (NHIS), or Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). We have developed weighting factors so that you can get to close correlations that are representative to the data, but it is not a national sampling of data. That is subtle but something that must be considered when interpreting the findings of this study design.

These are self-reported measures and though we incorporated things like the accelerometers to increase validity of physical activity assessment, we did not collect blood, anthropometrics, or a detailed dietary 24-hour survey to do a deeper dive in cross validation or self-reported responses. The common limitations that are present with any type of survey using self-reported responses must be considered when you are interpreting these findings. We had a fairly comprehensive response rate to those who responded to the survey. For those who responded, we also had a very high completion rate. We also have done a number of evaluations and crosschecks, and anthropometric measurement might be available later. We have geocoded data that we are working on internally, and we are still determining whether it can be made available for public use. We also took internal measures in order to cross check and cross validate the various survey response areas to see whether they were as comprehensive and complete as possible.

Q. Are there specific grant mechanisms encouraging public use of the FLASHE data for secondary data analysis?

A. NCI's small grant program (R03 PAR-16-416) provides an opportunity for secondary data analysis. There are also some phase project mechanisms that could include an opportunity to analyze FLASHE data, but that is more of a stretch. These projects would have to be highly individualized and fit the overall objective of the funding opportunity announcement. For example, there is one mechanism on developing interventions for health enhancing physical activity, and that is a phased project where someone could propose an initial study, but I think that would be more of a stretch. I would advise looking at the R03 program.

Contacts

FLASHE Team
Linda Nebeling, PhD, MPH, RD linda.nebeling@nih.gov
April Oh, PhD, MPH April.oh@nih.gov
Laura Dwyer, PhD Laura.dwyer@nih.gov

Frank Perna, EDD, PhD pernafm@mail.nih.gov