***Introduction***

The impact of a powerful mentor on a youth during the period of adolescence cannot be trivialized. A positive mentorship creates a paramount opportunity to create an everlasting change in an adolescent with negative risk factors as they transitions into adulthood. Therefore, programs such as Campus Connections supply these at-risk adolescents with a positive mentor in order to promote positive outcomes as the adolescents make this adulthood transition. However, many of these adolescents have negative risk factors such as: Coming from a low income family, participating in substance use, and having troubles with academics or home-life. These risk factors have the consequence of making adolescents more at risk for dropping out of the Campus Connections program before its appropriate end – thus minimizing an adolescent participant’s ability to obtain the full positive mentorship experience. Even more concerning is that these adolescents with higher risk factors are likely the most in need of a positive mentor relationship during their life during this critical time period. An unfortunate reality is that identifying the adolescent participants most likely to contribute to program attrition has its challenges. Therefore, the focus of this study is to reduce that challenge by applying an already validated and reliable measure to identify risk factors that are associated with adolescent program dropout. The validated measure utilized for this study was the *Risk Assessment* measure developed by Herrera, Dubois, & Grossman (2013) which is taken by adolescent caretakers prior to the Campus Connection program start. This validated measure assesses and quantifies risk factors that adolescents are experiencing, at home and in life into a more understandable single composite score. A higher score on this assessment indicates more risk factors associated with the adolescent participant. Using this measure, we built a predictive model to assess the association between the *Risk Assessment* composite score and likelihood of participant dropout.

Absentee Outline:

1. Importance of mentorship programs
2. Absenteeism and dropout
3. Importance of social programs in the community

**Methods**

*Data Collection*

Data from this study were taken from four semesters of CC. Within each semester of CC there is one session during four nights of the week (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday). A total of 609 mentee participants were recruited for participation of the Campus Connections Program from the Fall of 2015 to Spring of 2017. Of the 609 individuals, a total of 458 individuals did not start the Campus Connections program by the start of the program (25% attrition). Of the 458 mentees that started the CC program, a total of 45 dropped out and did not progress throughout the course of the entire program (10% attrition).

Additionally, program attendance data was collected throughout the mentees 12 weeks. Data was recorded from CC program staff on night of expected attendance. The average attendance of mentees attending the program was 9 days. However, the program attendance ranges from 1 day of attendance to the completed total 12 days of attendance.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Campus Connections Youth Participants**

| ***Parental Income*** | *Frequency* | *Percent* |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *<$20,000* | 98 | 21.88 |
| *$20,000 to $39,999* | 145 | 32.37 |
| *$40,000 to $59,999* | 81 | 18.08 |
| *$60,000 to $79,999* | 51 | 11.38 |
| *$80,000 to $99,999* | 23 | 5.13 |
| *$100,000 or more* | 50 | 11.16 |
| ***Ethnicity*** | *Frequency* | *Percent* |
| *White* | 261 | 58.26 |
| *Hispanic* | 121 | 27.01 |
| *Other* | 66 | 14.73 |
| ***Gender*** | *Frequency* | *Percent* |
| *Male* | 255 | 56.92 |
| *Female* | 192 | 42.86 |
| *Other* | 1 | 0.22 |
| ***Age*** | Mean | SD |
|  | 14.33 | 1.80 |

*Statistical Procedures*

A multiple variable logistic regression model was performed to assess program the outcome of program dropout. This research study controlled for many important variables including, mentee gender, mentee age, parental income, mentee ethnicity Demographic descriptive statistics are available in Table 1. Additionally, Semester of attendance (Fall 2015, Spring 2016, Fall 2016, and Spring 2017) night of attendance (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) and class room of weekly attendance (two possible rooms) were controlled for to account for cohort and group differences.

*Risk Measure*

To assess mentee risk, the *Risk Screening Tool* (RST) developed by Herrera, Dubois, & Grossman(2013) was used to understand youth risk. The RST is a 32 item questionnaire that youth mentee caretakers would fill out prior to the start of Campus Connections (α = .70). Items in the RST are answered as either “Yes” or “No” and ask questions referring to their child (I.e. *This child has experimented with drugs or alcohol*) or the child’s environment (I.e. *This child lives in a public housing development*). All items answered as “Yes” within the RST contribute to the youth’s Risk score, in which a higher score indicates a larger number of risk factors. For the purpose of this study, Environmental and Individual risk factors were combined for an overall composite risk score.

*Dropout*

Data from this study was collected over 2 years and 4 semesters of Campus Connections. Families of youth that did not attend Campus Connections were attempted to be contacted via program staff. If the family indicated the youth was dropping out of the program, reasons were noted. However, if family of the youth mentee could not be contacted, after 2-3 weeks of no attendance within the program, the youth mentee was considered to be dropped out of the program. Only youth mentees that dropped out of the program *after* the program started are included within this analyses.

*Attendance*

Campus Connections program staff tentatively took attendance records for each week of the 12 week Campus Connections program. Instances in which youth did not arrive to Campus Connections, then youth were marked as non-attendees. If youth arrived, but were late, they were having attended the program according to the use of this study.

*Descriptive Statistics*

**Results**

All descriptive statistics and analytic procedures were performed using *SAS Version 9.4*. Logistic regression analysis were performed to assess program dropout (1 = dropped program, 0 = program completed). A poisson regression model was used to assess the association between risk and the rate of attendance throughout the course of the 12-week program.

*Dropout*

Results from the logistic regression model indicate that higher scores on the Risk measure are highly predictive of program dropout (b=0.118, 95%CI [0.034, 0.201], p = 0.0058). Additionally, the odds of an individual dropping out increase 12.5% per unit increase on the Risk scale (OR = .125, 95%CI [1.035, 1.223]).

Model 1: Overall Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *p-value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Overall Risk* | 4.3880 | 1.4512 | **0.0026** | 1.5356 | 7.2405 |
| *Gender* | -0.2815 | 0.3588 | 0.4331 | -0.9868 | 0.4237 |
| *Age* | 0.3078 | 0.1467 | **0.0365** | 0.01946 | 0.5960 |

Model 2: Internal Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *p-value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Internal Risk* | 2.9205 | 0.9005 | **0.0013** | 1.1504 | 4.6906 |
| *Gender* | -0.3065 | 0.3564 | 0.3903 | -1.0071 | 0.3941 |
| *Age* | 0.2796 | 0.1475 | 0.0586 | -0.01025 | 0.5695 |

Model 3: External Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *p-value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *External Risk* | 2.3514 | 1.3769 | 0.0884 | -0.3551 | 5.0579 |
| *Gender* | -0.2901 | 0.3531 | 0.4117 | -0.9842 | 0.4039 |
| *Age* | 0.3183 | 0.1422 | **0.0258** | 0.03871 | 0.5978 |

Attendance

Model 4: Overall Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *P-value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Overall Risk* | -0.4509 | 0.1483 | **0.0024** | -0.7415 | -0.1603 |
| *Gender* | 0.0268 | 0.0332 | 0.4201 | -0.0383 | 0.0919 |
| *Age* | -0.0331 | 0.0107 | **0.0020** | -0.0541 | -0.0121 |

Model 5: Internal Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *P-Value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Internal Risk* | -0.3526 | 0.0980 | **0.0003** | -0.5447 | -0.1604 |
| *Gender* | 0.0307 | 0.0333 | 0.3569 | -0.0346 | 0.0959 |
| *Age* | -0.0287 | 0.0108 | **0.0080** | -0.0500 | -0.0075 |

Model 6: External Risk

| *Parameter* | *Estimate* | *Standard Error* | *P-Value* | *95% CI* | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *External Risk* | -0.1917 | 0.1330 | **0.1494** | -0.4523 | 0.0689 |
| *Gender* | 0.0240 | 0.0332 | 0.4697 | -0.0410 | 0.0890 |
| *Age* | -0.0364 | 0.0107 | **0.0007** | -0.0573 | -0.0154 |

References

Herrera, C., DuBois, D. L., & Grossman, J. B. (2013). The role of risk: Mentoring experiences and outcomes for youth with varying risk profiles. New York, NY: A Public project distributed by MDRC.

Lauer, P. A., Akiba, M., Wilkerson, S. B., Apthorp, H. S., Snow, D., & Martin-Glenn, M. L. (2006). Out-of-school-time programs: A meta-analysis of effects for at-risk students. *Review of educational research*, *76*(2), 275-313.