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Sarah Cole
**Behavioral Health Change in
Appalachian Women with High
Cardiovascular Disease Risk Report**

A literature review was completed this summer as preparation for the project “Behavioral Health Change in Appalachian Women with High Cardiovascular Disease Risk.” Using EBSCOhost and PubMed, sixty-six studies were analyzed to determine the efficacy of nurse-led lifestyle interventions on risk factors for cardiovascular disease (CVD). The purpose of this literature review was to gain knowledge, which would help determine the most effective ways to help women in rural Appalachian Kentucky reduce their risk for CVD.

The review examines current literature to support the project claim that the best approach to improving CVD outcomes is prevention efforts aimed at reducing risk factors. The studies and papers researched used interventions that took a “whole health” approach to improving the CVD risk factor profile of participants by promoting self-management of multiple risk factors. This approach involves adoption of basic healthy lifestyle choices with regard to eating, activity, adherence to prescribed medications, and self-management which promote positive outcomes.

Results

In analyzing the literature, several models of interventions relating to an improvement of risk factors were explored. Fifty-six of the studies had interventions that included personal instruction and education. In these projects, participants showed a significant improvement in risk factors including smoking, lack of physical activity, unhealthy eating, high blood pressure, BMI, waist circumference, increased cholesterol levels and cardiac events. Studies that had no direct contact with participants such as a web-based intervention and a community-wide media campaign showed little improvement in CVD risk factors.

A poster presentation was designed from this literature review and an abstract submitted to present at the Sigma Theta Tau International Leadership Summit being held in Indianapolis, IN in September 2010. Work with women in Breathitt and Perry counties will also begin in September.