### Abstract

**Objective:** The objective of this study was to predict health promoting behaviors (HPB) among children. Based on the Pender Health Promotion Model, we posed the following question: does affective state (self-esteem, depression) serve as a mediator for social support (support from teachers and parents) and context (neighborhood safety) as predictors of HPB (healthy eating, physical activity)?

**Methodology:** Data were derived via a secondary analysis of longitudinal data collected using the Coordinated Community Student Survey in a sample of 1,444 4th-6th grade students recruited from schools in a mid-Western state (male=42%, Caucasian American=72%, African American=17%).

**Findings:** Results of the meditational model indicated that neighborhood safety and social support had indirect effects on HPB via affective state. Neighborhood safety and social support were both significant predictors of affective state ($p \leq .05$), although these variables did not significantly predict HPB directly. Affective state was a significant predictor of HPB ($p=.01$), and the Sobel test indicated that affective state was a significant mediator between neighborhood safety ($p \leq .001$) and social support ($p \leq .001$).

**Conclusions:** The results of this study suggest that efforts designed to instill HPB in school-age children must be based on public health models grounded in systems approaches rather than one-solution causal models. Whether individual children will be responsive to attempts to instill HPB will depend on the extent to which prevention efforts are capable of improving affective state (self-esteem and depression) so that children can be receptive to HPB messages. Nursing preventive-intervention approaches, therefore, should be multifaceted, focusing on enhancing self-esteem and reducing depression, while simultaneously working to build support systems that effectively enhance HPB in children. These results can inform health care providers, teachers, parents, and researchers interested in enhancing factors for promoting health behaviors for future interventions.

**Keywords:** Health Promoting Behavior, School Age Children, Pender Health Promotion Model

**Presentation:** Oral