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Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport

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80% of Black women are overweight or obese, but only a third are physically active on a regular basis.

Black Women DO Workout!— Or If We Don't, We Need to Start

Recently, I was invited to join the Facebook group, “Black Women DO Workout!” (BWDW). This group was created as a grassroots movement to engage one million Black women to join the fight against the obesity epidemic by committing to a physically active lifestyle. This movement is sorely needed because almost 80% of Black women are overweight or obese, but only a third of us are physically active on a regular basis. In addition, 22% of us report “complete inactivity,” defined as not engaging in any type of leisure time activity (e.g., any physical activities or exercises such as running, calisthenics, golf, gardening, or walking) within the past month.

To date, the BWDW Facebook group has almost 36,000 friends. On a daily basis, hundreds of posts are made in which Black women share their stories of committing to not becoming an obesity statistic or, if they already are a statistic, of finding courage and discipline to reverse their overweight status. This social media site is littered with myriad photos of Black women of different sizes, shapes, and skin tones who each week move their bodies. There are pictures depicting women who are extremely fit; 40-, 50- and 60-year olds with better muscle tone and strength than your average 20-year old.

But these aren't the images that are of most interest to me. I love reading the words and seeing the progress of overweight and obese Black women who have made impressive strides to take their lives back by losing weight and thus improving their health. Witnessing women who have never or rarely participated in any form of leisure-time activity—and who have been more concerned with not “sweating out their hair”—become women who incorporate movement where they live, work, play, and worship to improve their health and overall quality of life.

Several recent posts have highlighted the importance of Black women not only creating a healthy life for themselves, but becoming a positive role model to younger generations. One post in particular is video footage of a mother following a popular exercise DVD. I particularly enjoyed seeing her 3-year old daughter mimicking her every move. Others have posted pictures of themselves and their daughters going on walks, playing sports or riding their bikes—simply being active together. This behavioral shift is imperative because 43% of Black girls aged 6-19 years are overweight or obese. This is of grave concern because we are starting to see our younger generation suffer from

“Workout” continued on page 2

Letter from the Director

Greetings from the Tucker Center! We hope your fall is off to a great start. In this edition of the newsletter you'll read about many of the exciting educational and research initiatives Tucker Center faculty, affiliated scholars, and students have been involved with over the summer, not to mention what we are planning for this upcoming semester.



Mary Jo Kane

We are pleased to announce that our fall Distinguished Lecture will examine the important and timely issue surrounding the critical role that physical activity plays in obesity prevention, particularly for minority females. A trio of internationally recognized experts and U of M scholars—Professors **Daheia Barr-Anderson**, **Beth Lewis** and **Dianne Neumark-Stzainer**—will share their interdisciplinary knowledge, latest research findings, and prevention/intervention efforts, all of which address the far-too-high and ever-increasing rates of obesity on a national scale. Please join us on Wednesday, October 20th, at the Humphrey Center on the West Bank. As an added bonus, you can learn more about this topic by reading Professor Barr-Anderson's feature story on this page, along with Professor Lewis' guest column on page 3.

We also highlight student-led research initiatives including the work of senior undergraduate student, **Salma Hussein**. Among her many contributions, Ms. Hussein played a major role in expanding our research on the physical activity—and all too often, unfortunately, inactivity—patterns among Somali adolescent girls living in the Twin Cities. In addition to Ms. Hussein's efforts, sport sociology doctoral student **Austin Stair Calhoun** continued to receive statewide recognition for her research on sport, gender, and new media, particularly social media. Finally, our Staff Update column features the work of yet another graduate student—research assistant **Maya Hamilton**.

This coming fall, members of the Tucker Center and other key stakeholders in women's sports will participate in conversations with ESPN as they launch a new brand aimed at expanding their female audience—**espnW**. Read more about **espnW** and our involvement in this bold initiative on page 2.

We continue to be asked to share our opinions and expertise, be part of national conversations, and conduct educational workshops on cutting-edge issues regarding how to maintain and advance girls' and women's involvement in sport and physical activity. To keep up to date on all the work we do at the Tucker Center, visit our webpage at www.tuckercenter.org.

—Mary Jo Kane, Director



the chronic diseases that used to be reserved for adults (e.g., diabetes, high blood pressure and cholesterol, sleep apnea, and some cancers). Being overweight in childhood is highly predictive of being overweight in adulthood, a trend which is evident among Black females.

In closing, seeing a page dedicated to promoting physical activity as a means to address the obesity crisis among Black women (and girls) makes me feel hopeful. It's good to know there is a growing number of people of the same gender and race as myself who are concerned

with creating and using their body as the strong powerhouse that it can be while obtaining better overall health.

Barr-Anderson will be a panelist for the TC fall Distinguished Lecture. Read more about it on page 4 and join us on October 20!

RESEARCH UPDATE



Salma Hussein

Over this past summer we continued our tradition of attracting and mentoring outstanding undergraduate students. **Salma Hussein**, a senior majoring in Public Health and Youth & Leadership Studies, is also a member of the U of M's McNair Scholars cohort. The McNair program is designed to provide minority, disabled, or low-income undergraduate students with the research skills necessary to gain admission to—and successfully complete—their graduate study.

Hussein was mentored by Dr. Nicole LaVoi and Ph.D. student Chelsey Thul as part of Thul's award-winning research project, "Program Evaluation and Interests of Somali Adolescent Girls and Women." Hussein was a key participant in the overall project and was actively engaged in her own research as well. A member of the Somali community in Minneapolis, she provided valuable cultural insights for LaVoi and Thul.

Thul's research project on females in the Somali community is part of an ongoing line of research being conducted by Tucker Center scholars. It examines barriers, antecedents, and correlates of physical activity among Somali females in the Twin Cities Metro Area. In her subproject, Hussein evaluated an all-female basketball program in the Cedar Riverside neighborhood supported by the Confederation of Somalis in Minnesota. Her findings will be used to generate culturally relevant physical activity opportunities for Somali girls and women, and to increase the physical activity behaviors and participation rates of this underserved population.

Hussein plans to pursue a graduate degree in public health, social work or a related field so that she can "bring the fruits of science to the poorest communities to help them move from dependency to independency through education."

Tucker Center Research Assistant and Ph.D. student **Austin Stair Calhoun** was featured in the University's prestigious *Driven to Discover: The Research Series*, an award-winning video series which highlights creative and innovative research at the U of M. In the video Calhoun describes her dissertation research—"Examining Homophobia in Sports and New Media"—along with a discussion of how she initially became interested in the topic. Calhoun's research examines the content of online coaching biographies of NCAA Division-I head coaches as a way to determine if personal stories and relationships (e.g., children and partners) of gay coaches are featured at all, and if so, do they resemble the stories told by and about heterosexual head coaches. Calhoun's academic adviser, Professor Mary Jo Kane, is also interviewed in the video feature. To watch the video, visit www.oit.umn.edu/research-series.

In addition to her participation in the video series—and due to her growing expertise and national recognition in this area—Calhoun was an invited panelist at the Twin Cities Social Media Breakfast themed "Social Media and Sport" which took place last June.



Austin Stair Calhoun

Tucker Center Film Fest!

Mark your calendars now: The Tucker Center is adding another exciting event to our programming! In honor of the 25th anniversary of National Girls and Women in Sports Day, we will be hosting the inaugural **Tucker Center Film Fest** during the first week of February, 2011. We'll be showing a director-authorized sneak preview of the award-winning "The Mighty Macs" (www.themightymacs.com), a film about the improbable journey of the Immaculata College women's basketball team who clinched the first-ever national championship in women's basketball in 1972. With a star-studded cast including Academy Award winner Ellen Burstyn, Carla Gugino, and David Boreanaz, this is a film you won't want to miss! Check our Web site for more information in the coming months.

DID YOU KNOW?

espnW to Debut in the Spring of 2011

ESPN, the *Worldwide Leader in Sports*, is in the process of expanding its brand—not to mention its global reach—yet again. The expansion, named **espnW**, is intended to appeal to girls engaged in high-school sports and to female athletes who want to continue their athletic involvement after college. By creating a Web-based presence devoted to sports information for women and adolescent girls, the new initiative "will cater to those sports-minded females who enjoy both the active and fan side of [all] sports," according to espnW insiders.

Recent research indicates that espnW couldn't come at a more opportune time—or fill a larger gap for consumers of and participants in women's sports. A 2009 update to the longitudinal report, "Gender in Televised Sport" (sponsored by the University of Southern California's Center for Feminist Research), found that coverage of women's sports is at a 20-year low. This past year alone, sportswomen received only 1.6% of airtime on the three major networks studied (ABC, CBS, NBC), while ESPN's *SportsCenter* devoted a paltry 1.4% of its airtime to coverage of women's sports.

These findings are particularly troubling given that ESPN's own data indicate that women make up 41% of the overall sports audience. It's an understatement to suggest that espnW is well positioned to take advantage of this vast, untapped market. The expected launch date for espnW is spring, 2011.



KEEP IN TOUCH WITH THE TUCKER CENTER!

There are several ways you can keep up to date with the most recent events and news from the Tucker Center. For starters, the Tucker Center's Web site is our online hub. Everything from current research to staff contacts can be found at:

www.tuckercenter.org

The Tucker Center also maintains a presence on Wordpress, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and via RSS:

- **Wordpress Blog:** tuckercenter.wordpress.org
- **Facebook:** z.umn.edu/tcfacebook
- **Twitter:** www.twitter.com/tuckercenter
- **YouTube:** www.youtube.com/tuckercenter
- **RSS Feed:** z.umn.edu/TCRSS

We hope you'll take advantage of all the ways we are sharing information!



Guest Column: Exercise and Weight Maintenance for Females: There is Hope!

—Dr. Beth Lewis

Why do you exercise? And if you don't exercise, why do you experience that nagging feeling of guilt for not exercising? For many women, exercising is about losing or maintaining their weight and/or improving the way their body looks. Women may continue to exercise because they fear that if they stop, they will gain weight. Other women may exercise to lose that last five or ten pounds that has stuck around much too long. But does exercise really help with losing or maintaining weight? Or is there more to the story?

Two articles which gave the wrong message to women about exercise and health ran in prominent media outlets earlier this year: A *Newsweek* piece entitled "Exercise and Weight Loss: Abandon All Hope," and a similar piece in *TIME*, "Why Exercise Won't Make You Thin." Both articles were based on a research study which found that women of normal weight needed to do at least 60 minutes of exercise per day to maintain their weight, and that exercise had no effect for overweight or obese women in preventing additional weight gain. Unfortunately, there were several flaws in this study that *Newsweek* neglected to point out, including an inadequate measure of exercise, self-reports of estimated weights by participants (weight was not measured by the study staff), and the study did not provide data about the women's diet. Misleading articles such as these are common in mainstream media, and some magazine articles have even suggested that exercise can actually lead to weight gain!

Such information sends an unhelpful message to women, given that researchers suggest that both exercise and a healthy diet are needed for weight loss or maintenance. Additionally, popular press articles often fail to mention that exercise is also linked to many long-term health benefits including reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, stroke, and some types of cancers, as well as short-term benefits such as improved sleep, more energy, and better moods. For example, research indicates that exercise is potentially just as effective as antidepressant medication for treating depression.

In summary, research tells us that exercise is an important component of weight loss and maintenance. So what can women do to motivate themselves to begin or maintain an exercise program? It is important to make exercise a priority by scheduling it as you would any other appointment. It is also important to set realistic goals for exercising based on your own personal schedule. Next time you exercise, think about how strong you feel afterwards. Focus on how energized you feel the rest of the day knowing that you did something good for your body. Understanding that exercise is linked to weight loss and maintenance is important for women, but it is often the immediate benefits of exercise that motivate women to continue exercising over the long term.

STAFF UPDATES: MAYA HAMILTON

Maya Hamilton, a St. Paul native, joined the Tucker Center in the fall of 2009 as a Research Assistant under the guidance of her academic adviser and Tucker Center Associate Director, Nicole LaVoi. Hamilton earned a B.A. in history from Yale University in 2001 where she wrote her thesis on the Scottish Enlightenment and the 18th-century debate on the compatibility of commerce and virtue. Following graduation, she worked as a copy and freelance editor for such prestigious entities as the New York University Press, University of St. Thomas School of Law, and the University of Minnesota Press. In addition to these work experiences, Hamilton is an ASCA Level III certified swim coach who has taught and coached swimming at the high school and intercollegiate levels. Currently, she is an Assistant Swim Coach at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

For her Master's thesis, Hamilton will examine critical issues related to moral and ethical decision-making among intercollegiate coaches. Not surprisingly, coaches are often faced with moral dilemmas around a "win at all costs" mentality. How they navigate a desire to be ethical and fair in their judgments and practices toward their players often conflicts with the pressures they face in balancing winning versus player development. Hamilton's research on these important issues



will fill a much needed gap in the sport psychology literature.

During her tenure in the Tucker Center, Hamilton has provided key leadership by helping get the WeCoach™ initiative—an educational and networking resource for women who coach or want to coach—off the ground. She is also conducting an extensive review of gender differences in the coaching science literature.

Hamilton is also a 2nd-degree black belt who has practiced numerous forms of martial arts. She trains in Brazilian *jiu jitsu*, competes for Revolution Defense Fitness, and enjoys nearly all outdoor activities: "Being a part of the Tucker Center has given me an opportunity to meet and work with wonderful people who share my passion for supporting and empowering girls and women as athletes and coaches." Clearly, Hamilton's diverse talents make her a great asset to the Tucker Center team!

KUDOS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Honors & Awards

- Tucker Center research assistant **Chelsey Thul** was awarded the College of Education and Human Development's (CEHD) Hauge Fellowship. She was also invited to be a member of the *Program in Health Disparities Research Group*, a groundbreaking initiative in the U of M's Medical School.
- Tucker Center research assistant **Austin Stair Calhoun** received the CEHD's *2010 Women's Philanthropic Leadership Circle Award*.
- Sport psychology doctoral student **Lindsay Kipp** was awarded the 2010-11 Eloise M. Jaeger Scholarship for Students in the Tucker Center. Kipp will use the funds to support her project, "Predictors of Well-being in Female Adolescent Athletes."

Scholarly Activities

- Tucker Center Director **Mary Jo Kane** has been named to the espnW Advisory Panel along with 29 of the most prominent women and men in sports around the country. Kane presented research on "Women as Sports Fans" at the inaugural espnW retreat in September at the historic Torrey Pines Lodge near San Diego. Read more about espnW in the *Did You Know* column on page 2.
- Affiliated Scholar **Jo Ann Buysse** and M.A. student **Bria Borcharding** published an article, "Framing Gender and Disability: A Cross Cultural Analysis of Photographs from the 2008 Paralympic Games," in the *International Journal of Sport Media*.
- Co-director **Maureen Weiss**, along with co-authors **Windee Weiss** and **Anthony Amorose**, published an article in the *Journal of Sports*

Sciences titled, "Sport Commitment Among Competitive Female Athletes: Test of an Expanded Model."

- Sport sociology doctoral student **Emily Houghton** attended the 3rd International Conference on *Sport, Race and Ethnicity* at the University of West Indies in Barbados in June. Houghton also contributed four entries to the multi-volume collection, *Sports Around the World: History, Culture, and Practice*, to be published in 2011.

Presentations

- LaVoi** had two abstracts accepted into the 5th International Working Group on Women and Sport (IWG) World Conference on Women held in May, 2010, in Sydney, Australia. Over 500 attendees from 70 countries shared research and best practices pertaining to female participation in physical activity. The Sydney Scoreboard, an Internet-based measurement tool aimed at increasing women's representation on international sporting boards, was unveiled as part of the ongoing legacy of IWG.
- Weiss** and **Nicole Bolter**, sport psychology doctoral candidate, presented their research paper, "Coaching for Character: Development and Initial Validation for a Measure of Coaching Behaviors Focused on Sportsmanship," at the North American Society for the Psychology of Sport and Physical Activity's annual conference last June.

To learn more about the depth and breadth of work that TC faculty and students are involved with, please visit our website at www.tuckercenter.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter and on our YouTube channel and iTunes podcast.

FALL 2010 DISTINGUISHED LECTURE

Reducing Obesity Among Minority Females: The Critical Role of Physical Activity

a panel featuring

Beth Lewis, Daheia J. Barr-Anderson & Dianne Neumark-Sztainer

Wednesday, October 20, 2010, 7-9 pm

Cowles Auditorium, Hubert H. Humphrey Center



Beth Lewis



Daheia J. Barr-Anderson



Dianne Neumark-Sztainer

About the Distinguished Lecture

Over the past three decades, the prevalence of obesity has dramatically increased in adults and children, with the highest increases among minority females. Negative consequences stemming from being dangerously overweight—diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and some cancers—are an enormous public health concern. These negative outcomes are particularly problematic for minority females. Nearly half of African American (46%) and Latina (42%) girls aged 12-19 are overweight or obese, compared to less than 30% of White girls. To address this national epidemic, a trio of prominent University of Minnesota scholars will discuss the latest research on the critical role physical activity plays in obesity prevention/intervention strategies and policies. They will also examine evidence-based, culturally appropriate approaches toward increasing physical activity among women and girls of color.

About the Panelists

Beth Lewis, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology and an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Psychiatry and Human Behavior at Brown University Medical School. She is also a licensed psychologist. Professor Lewis received her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology and completed postdoctoral training in behavioral interventions for exercise. Her groundbreaking research focuses on how to motivate sedentary adults, especially women, to become more physically active. Professor Lewis has authored several articles in top-tier academic journals and serves as the Principal Investigator on grants funded by the National Institutes of Health. Currently, she is the Principal Investigator on a study examining the effect of exercise on preventing postpartum depression.

Daheia J. Barr-Anderson, Ph.D., M.P.H., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Kinesiology and is trained in epidemiology. Her research examines physical activity, sedentary behaviors, and obesity prevention in children and adolescents—particularly interventions that incorporate physical activity and nutrition to achieve healthy outcomes and to decrease racial/ethnic health inequalities. Professor Barr-Anderson has received grants from General Mills Foundation and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation for her research on the environmental influences of physical activity and obesity among adolescent girls. She was recently named a Scholar at the Deborah E. Powell Center for Women's Health.

Dianne Neumark-Sztainer, Ph.D., M.P.H., R.D., is a Professor in the Division of Epidemiology and Community Health, School of Public Health, and an Adjunct Professor in the Department of Pediatrics. Her award-winning research focuses on adolescent nutrition and the prevention of weight-related problems including eating disorders, body dissatisfaction, and obesity. Professor Neumark-Sztainer has published over 250 articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals and has served as Principal Investigator on several federally funded grants. She has received numerous honors for her innovative work including prestigious awards from the National Eating Disorders Association, the International Academy for Eating Disorders, and the Eating Disorders Coalition.

Watch the Spring 2010 Distinguished Lecture live:
www.tuckercenter.org/lecture/live_stream.htm

Visit our multimedia archive of past Distinguished Lectures with streaming video, PowerPoint presentations, and other informative resources:
www.tuckercenter.org/lecture/media_library.htm



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