

Students exchange sleep and food for good grades

by William Holt

The stressful nature of the college lifestyle can cause bad eating habits, physical and psychological reactions and sleepless nights.

"Most of these problems go hand-in-hand with each other. Most students take their studies very seriously," said Marie Schrader, a counseling psychologist at the Student Development Center.

Schrader described the university process as ongoing problems that often don't get solved and lingers in the student's mind all through the day. "Sometimes, people can't turn their mind off," Schrader said.

Effects of a stressful student lifestyle can be less food consumption, less nutritious food intake and more junk food intake. "A lot of students will skip breakfast," Schrader said. "They'll eat a hamburger for lunch. When it comes time for dinner, many will find whatever they can that can be prepared in five minutes. Residence hall students often have the advantage of meal plans. Students off campus will just say to themselves, 'I don't have time.'"

Schrader said long study

hours and work schedules often don't allow a student to get adequate exercise. Exercise creates a healthy appetite and develops a greater need for sleep.

The erratic sleeping hours that students hold, go against our culture's eight to five schedule. Often work, classes and studies overshadow simple necessities and recreation in a person's life. She said that insomnia is especially prevalent around midterms and examination periods.

"All of these problems affect the others," Schrader said. She also said a student may have a poor physical appearance and may have psychological problems attributed to a school career. "These problems are usually not deep-seated. However, a person should always look back at his or her day and address what things have been troublesome." She said if there are chronic problems, outside help should be sought.

She suggested a person having persistent problems should start at the health center to find out if there are any physical reasons. The Student Development Center on the second floor of the James R.

Dickenson Library is a free service that provides counseling to any student in need.

The SDC also provides a Relaxation and Stress Management program where students express their problems in a group setting. The group meets once a week between 3 and 4 p.m. every Monday. It is free to students and is open for membership.

To avoid unnecessary stress, Schrader suggested a student take as many credit hours as needed, then adjust his or her work schedule around school. She said a student should not try to work full-time while taking a full credit load. A full work and credit load makes it very difficult to have blocks of time to use for necessary studying.

Drugs such as sleeping pills or stimulants should be only a last resort, Schrader said. "I would be the last person in the world to think that students should take drugs in order to get better sleep," Schrader said.

She said she would rather see a student confront the problem that is causing sleep loss or eating disorders.

Skin cancer is often an insidious foe

It's that time of year again. Its time to find the bathing suit, put away the books, and run to the pool. But before going, don't forget the sunscreen.

According to 1990 American Cancer Society statistics, cancer of the skin is the most common form of all cancers and accounts for more than 600,000 cases each year.

The three main types of skin cancers are basal cell, squamous cell and melanoma.

Basal cell cancers account for 75 percent of all skin cancers. These cancers appear as small,

shiny, fleshy nodules on exposed parts of the body.

Basal cell cancers have a high rate of recurrence. A person who develops one basal cell cancer has a 40 percent chance of developing another. This form of cancer is occurring more and more among young people as a result of direct exposure to the sun.

Twenty percent of all skin cancers are squamous cell cancers which most often develop on the face, ears, lips and mouth. These cancers appear as scaly patches or nodules.

Squamous cell cancers spread more quickly than basal cell cancers and are more likely to spread to other areas of the body.

The cure rate for basal cell and squamous cell cancers exceeds 95 percent, according to the ACS.

Malignant melanoma is the most serious form of skin cancer. Of the estimated 7,800 deaths due to skin cancer each year, 6,000 are from malignant melanoma. ACS figures state the survival rate for early stage melanoma reaches 90 percent, although that falls to 39 percent in later stages.

Melanoma occurs in the cells that produce melanin, the pigment that results in a tan to help protect against sunburn. This form of cancer shows up as dark brown or black mole-like lesions with irregular edges.

Overexposure to the sun is the major factor leading to skin cancer. The best ways to prevent sunburn are to avoid the sun between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m., use sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15, wear loose clothing and hats and stay away from sunlamps and tanning beds.

While it may be difficult to follow these precautions because summer means tanning, remember to tan gradually and use sunscreen. Gradual tanning permits optimal production of the melanin to take effect. This protects against sunburn. Gradual exposure also helps to thicken the outer layer of the skin which protects the inner skin layers from harmful sun rays.

Promoting positive peer pressure

by Donna Bates

Positive peer pressure is the consensus among today's youth that drinking and driving, careless sex, smoking and taking drugs are no longer considered "cool."

Ray Rodriguez, UNLV health educator, said, "Twenty years ago the average person wouldn't think twice about getting behind the wheel drunk." Rodriguez said things have definitely changed for the better and awareness has been the key reason for this change.

Tina Close, an engineer major, said being hit and almost killed by a drunk driver in February has completely changed her life.

Close remembered times when she shouldn't have driven and regrets them. Now she is an advocate of safe partying and hopes to educate others from her experience.

"There are no excuses for

driving drunk," Close said. "Having a designated driver or taking a cab are safe alternatives for everyone." She has vowed to take her own advice.

Rodriguez pointed out that information leads to acceptance. The AIDS virus and the education campaign that has accompanied it have played a large roll in the accepted idea that safe sex saves lives. Society as a whole has been forced to confront safe sex head on.

The results of increased cancer risks in smokers versus nonsmokers alone are reason enough for smoking to be viewed in a less desirable light.

The days of being ridiculed for not trying cigarettes and drugs have given way to a more responsible and informed generation. The results of today's peer pressure are the use of common sense that saves lives, not the use of drugs that destroy them.

Peer educators teach students good health

by Tonya Lomeo

The UNLV Student Health Center offers a Peer Health Education program which involves students teaching other students about current health-related issues.

"Health education is better received from a peer than from a professional," health educator Ray Rodriguez said. "Peers can place themselves where myself and other professionals can't. They are perceived as being a part of that group and that carries more credibility."

The 12 students in the program are involved in a group-training process where they learn and discuss current issues relating to specific peer education topics. After this process they present what they have learned to other interested groups on campus.

This semester students have expanded the health education program to include a Peer Sexuality Education

group. Members are taught about such issues as sexually transmitted diseases, date and acquaintance rape, birth control and contraception.

According to Rodriguez only two qualifications must be met to join the program—passing an interview and being able to attend the mandatory 30 hours of training involved.

Current peer educators are from diverse backgrounds with majors ranging from criminal justice to physical education. Anyone can join the program. The group has room for 20 members.

There are two health education programs currently under development: Peer Nutrition Education and Peer Alcohol and Other Drugs Education. The Student Health Center hopes to have the nutrition program running by the Fall '92 semester and alcohol and drugs program running by the Spring '93 semester.

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