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Chelsea A. Adamski

***Collaborative Care vs Routine Care: A comparison of successful outcome rates of patients with depression and anxiety based on patient perception.***

**Abstract:**

The mental health sector of medical practice has always been under pressure to utilize more efficient treatment methods and to provide better quality of care based on its limited accessibility to care and long-term treatments. There are two distinct models currently utilized: collaborative care and routine care, sometimes known as traditional care. Unlike typical routine care by a general physician in a primary care office, the collaborative care model uses an evidence-based, patient-centered strategy to manage mental health on a short-term basis in one convenient environment. This study aims to compare the effectiveness of the collaborative care model versus routine care for the treatment of mental health. A descriptive/ observational study was conducted using surveys to determine if there were differences in successful patient outcomes between the two models. Recent studies have demonstrated that routine care is not able to consistently improve clinical outcomes and quality of care for the mental health population due to its lack of resources and specialists, while other literature has demonstrated the consistent success of collaborative care. The hypothesis for this study was not proven true nor false because no significant inferences could be made within the data due to small sample size from Mental Health Association of Erie County.

**Faculty mentor(s): Caitlin Szalkowski and Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS**

Michelle Allen

***Examining Differences of DRAI Scores Based on Gender in Assessing Risk of Detention***

**Abstract:**

A form of evidence-based practice in juvenile justice in Erie County is the use of Detention Risk Assessment Instrument System (DRAI). The purpose of this study is to examine the difference in DRAI scores between gender, and their impact of juvenile detention risk assessment instrument (DRAI) on decision-making in Erie County. This was a quantitative, cross-sectional study using secondary data provided by the Erie County Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative from April-June 2016.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Paula Barton

*From Hardware Keys to Proximity Cards*

**Abstract:**

Hardware Keys to Proximity Cards is a research project that is being implemented to determine whether the use of proximity cards would be beneficial on Erie Community College Campuses. This project has been designed to understand what faculty and staff of Erie Community College have witnessed on campus, their opinions on safety and security procedures, and where they may have access too. The three campuses that are being researched are the North, South, and City Campuses. It is believed that keys are not returned to the corresponding office.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Professor Fred Becker**

Nathaniel W. Boldt

***Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE) Initiative***

**Abstract:**

The NYS GIVE initiative is an advanced effort to encourage the use of evidence-based practices to decrease and prevent gun violence. The purpose of this project is to assist The Office of the Erie County Sheriff in applying for a grant to receive funding for the GIVE Initiative (2 Deputy Sheriff Positions). The main objective of the Erie County Sheriff's Office and its two GIVE Deputy's is to reduce gun violence in Erie County.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Eileen Burns

***Do Juvenile Delinquents Recidivate at a Higher Rate Compared to Other Petitioner Types in Erie County New York***

**Abstract:**

Do juvenile delinquents recidivate at a higher rate than other petitioner types in Erie County, New York? The purpose of this project is to focus attention on reducing the recidivism rate of juvenile offenders in Erie County, New York. Juveniles who violate Probation are more likely to recidivate at a higher rate than Juvenile Delinquents and PINS.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Tavializ Cardona

***Comparing Homeless Outcomes When Utilizing the Housing First Model as a Tool to Reduce Homelessness***

**Abstract**

The Housing First Model has been used as a tool to assist individuals experiencing mental illness and who are homeless, in receiving supportive services to become stably housed and self-sufficient. If formally and adequately implemented, the Housing First Model will help reduce homelessness and recidivism rates among this population.

This comparative study explored homeless outcomes in Erie County, who did not have formal Housing First Model implemented, to Chittenden County who did have a formal Housing First Model.

**Faculty mentors: Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS and Dr. Dana Bagwell**



LaShawn M. Chinn

*Needs Assessment for a Western New York Diaper Bank*

**Abstract:**

Diapers are an essential need for babies but too often many families cannot afford an adequate supply. Multiple social service programs are available that assist people with costs for food, shelter, medical insurance, baby formula and day care, however none offer help for diapers. The purpose of this research was to conduct a survey to determine if there is a need for families to get assistance with obtaining diapers. Additionally, the aim was to find what factors were associated with those individuals that report a need for diapers. The data collection method was creating a typed written survey and distributing at social service agencies for completion and hand collected. The research provided information on diaper need such as: number of diapers used daily, percentage of families that have been without enough diapers and how often has not having enough diapers prevented child from attending daycare.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Mary Diana Pouli and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

James Bigler-Damian

***Town of Lancaster Police Staffing Assessment***

**Abstract:**

The researcher seeks to assess the current staffing levels of the Lancaster Police Department to try to determine if the Lancaster Police Department's current staffing levels are adequate to comparable jurisdictions in both population size and officer workload. The researcher looked at the per-capita rate of the Lancaster Police Department and compared that to the National average and comparable jurisdictions in New York State. The researcher also looked at all service calls for the Lancaster Police Department from 2013-2017 to see what officers spend their time doing. The researcher seeks to use the actual workload to supplement the per-capita ratio to enable the Police Department to hire more police officers.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Yvonne Downes**

***The Use of Boys and Girls Clubs will Decrease Delinquency***

**Abstract:**

The researcher, working with Town of Cheektowaga officials, is writing a proposal to show the need for a Boys and Girls Club in their town. The proposal will show that Boys and Girls Clubs are effective at strengthening the four bonds identified in the Social Bond Theory and will decrease delinquency. This historic study, written by Travis Hirschi (1969), identified four bonds—attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Attachment is having a strong bond with family members, teachers, and friends, which will deter delinquency because the child will not want to disappoint loved ones. If a juvenile is committed to something, they know if they engage in deviant behavior that their activity or commitment will be in jeopardy. When a juvenile is involved in sports or extra-curricular activities, they are less likely to engage in delinquency because they simply do not have the time. Lastly, a juvenile is less likely to commit crime when they have belief in the law.

The need for such a program is demonstrated by comparing crime data from Cheektowaga, that does not have a Boys and Girls club with Buffalo, Depew, Eden, and Amherst, that does have a club. Official police data was collected for Juveniles under 18 in Cheektowaga, this data showed that most of their crimes were property offenses like shoplifting—typically committed at the Walden Galleria Mall that is 3-minutes away from the Cheektowaga High School. It is hypothesized that students involved in afterschool activities, will be more attached, committed and involved in activities which will improve their belief in the law and may deter them from committing crimes after school.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Melinda S Drabant

***Telehealth Needs Assessment for Children with Special Health Care Needs in Rural Western New York State***

**Abstract:**

A needs assessment is a critical part of the design and implementation of a telehealth project. This study assessed the need for a telehealth link between a remote rural community and urban medical providers. Often times, families that reside in rural communities lack the specialty professionals that a child with a special health care need would require. Currently clinics that provide appropriately trained staff and specialized services for children with disabilities are located outside Cattaraugus County. Telehealth, a technology based portal of healthcare can now allow rural patients to see specialists without leaving their communities. The delivered survey questions were developed by the researcher in order to determine specific needs for such a healthcare system in Cattaraugus County.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS and Dr. Brian Poliner**

Barbara A. Fedchak

*Identifying and Mitigating Distractions in the Workplace*

**Abstract:**

Distractions affect focus, which influences the productivity of the workforce, which ultimately influences the culture and stability of the workplace. It is easy to assume that banning personal devices from use by the workforce will solve the issue, but personal devices are just the tip of the iceberg. Every workplace has its own set of unique distractions, that if identified may not be necessarily eliminated, but managed by supervisors and administration that are aware of the distractions affecting their teams.

Administrators benefit in knowing the stress created by the ever-increasing burden of devices and their ability to send notifications that maybe are needed, instant messages from customers or co-workers that can divert the employee from their assigned task or even office devices are broken or inoperable or new devices that workers have not been adequately trained in their use.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Jenna Dulak and Dr. Brian Poliner**

***Veteran Suicide: What are the Characteristics?***

**Abstract:**

In 2014, more than 7,400 veterans commit suicide, which accounted for 18 percent of all suicides in the United States of America. The veteran population alone is less than nine percent of our population. Researchers have noted that the risk of suicide in veterans is 21 percent higher when compared to non-veteran adults. These characteristics include, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), homelessness, mental health, divorce, and substance abuse. Since the United States of America has been at war for over two decades, suicide rates in Veterans has become a national concern. The present program for suicide prevention has not had a significant effect on our Veteran populations suicide rates between 2001 and 2014. Studies have shown that on average 20 veterans commit suicide per day. (2016, August 3) Veterans are returning home and they aren't provided with adequate resources for dealing with life after war. The data collection method used in this study was a secondary data analysis. Data were collected from the Veteran Affairs Medical Center, Department of Defense Administration records and the National Death Index. Veterans were asked mental health history, income, marital status, age, if they had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder All data used were from previous studies, conducted in various states and settings.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Steven Wischmann, M.A and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

Benjamin Gemza

***An International Exploration of Stress Related Phenomena and Job Satisfaction in Changing Academia Workplaces across Cultural Boundaries***

**Abstract:**

Previous research has indicated that working in academia is a comparatively stressful occupation. A rise in stress levels have been noted as a result of a combination of a changing academia environment and its globalization, driven by financial and ideological necessities. Additionally, the need to remain relevant in their respective fields of interest, and demands for becoming savvy technological practitioners, has added a dimension of stress to the profession. Stress has been determined to impact job satisfaction and employee well-being, physical and psychological. These conditions may ultimately impact and have consequences on the quality of education provided. Therefore, efforts to understand and minimize stress producing phenomena may to a great extent improve the quality of the classroom experience. Previous studies document well the financial cost of stress and its associated impact on satisfaction to the institution.

The purpose of this study is to identify the perceived sources of stress and consequent stress levels with academia across cultural boundaries. It is the hope of this researcher to explore differences in stress producing phenomena and to assess employee well-being across international borders. This study will investigate academic institutions in a wide range of geographic regions, and both Eastern and Western Cultures, namely, Hungary, and China. Both intrinsic and extrinsic variables will be explored. It is the hope that this study will provide insight on any noted differences and similarities on a range of issues that produce occupational stress and provide suggestions for the embracing of change while reducing levels of stress.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Brian Poliner and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

***Cooperation between government and church - International comparative of secondary education policy in the United States and Hungary***

**Abstract:**

In Hungary, the state and the churches have a specific relation. The state and religious communities may cooperate to achieve community goals, in case of education policy as well. In the United States of America the separation of church and state has long been viewed as a cornerstone of American democracy. The two different kind of strategies help us to make comparative analysis on the Hungarian and American education policy, regarding the religious schools and to find how significant the cooperation is between the government and the churches.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Brian Poliner and Dr. Peter Forgach**



Makeda Holt

***Minority Women Experiencing Health Disparities and their Health Care Outcomes***

**Abstract:**

One of the greatest barriers to healthcare for minority women is the under-recognition of the profound influence of culture on both the delivery and receiving of healthcare. Research has shown positive results on the impact Community Health Workers (CHWs) have with working among the ethnic minority women population. The Community Health Worker(CHW) program aides in fulfilling multiple functions such as promoting behavior change, increasing knowledge, advocating for everyone involved in the program, and providing referral services making an impact on positive health outcomes.

Using data collected in a survey of community participants at Buffalo Prenatal-Perinatal Network in Buffalo, New York, this descriptive research examined those who participant in the Community Health Worker(CHW) program and those who are not involved with any community -based program resulting in the differences in self-reported satisfaction of health care access.

**Faculty mentor: Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS**

Ryan Hunter

***Gun Presence and Aggressive Attitudes: The Weapons Effect in College Freshman***

**Abstract:**

Firearm related homicides, suicides, and accidental deaths are prevalent issues, especially in inner cities. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CFDCP) estimates that 88% of adolescent homicides involve the use of firearms. Contrastingly, an average of 69% of adult homicides involve a firearm (FBI UCR, 2011-2016). Comparing these statistics is alarming, due to the inability of an adolescent to own a handgun legally. The weapons effect predicts that the presence of a gun is a stimulus for aggressive attitudes. Does the presence of a firearm in the household make adolescents more likely to act aggressively? The experiment included 64 freshman students enrolled at Hilbert College during the Spring 2018 semester. Participants volunteered to complete a confidential psychological evaluation (approved by the college's Institutional Review Board) regarding aggressive attitudes. Results indicated that participants who had a gun in the home had a higher aggression score (73.3) than participants without a gun in the home (66.3); Therefore, validating the weapons effect. Familiarity with gun safety did not display a significant relationship between aggressive attitudes as hypothesized, questioning the efficacy of gun safety programming.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Martin Floss**

Erik C. Johanson

***City of Tonawanda Police Department Recruitment***

**Abstract:**

The City of Tonawanda Police Department is having a difficult time staffing their agency with minority or female officers. The root of the issue is due to a lack of interest from minorities or females with the required civil service exam to become a police officer. A survey was conducted to determine how effective the City of Tonawanda Civil Service Department has been with advertising their Police Exams, along with interest of non-residents with taking the exam. The City of Tonawanda is predominately white; therefore opening the exam to non-residents along with targeted recruitment will boost the eligibility pool of female and minority applicants.

**Faculty Mentor: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor Randy Zimpfer**

***Racial Profile of Admissions to Opioid Treatment Programs in Erie County***

**Abstract:**

In the current opioid epidemic in the United States, State and local governments have made efforts to fight addiction. However, efforts for the efficient treatment of addiction do not focus on tailoring services for racial and ethnic minorities, thus prolonging the devastating effects of addiction for many suffering individuals. Literature indicates that African Americans and other racial minorities experience worst care for substance use disorder compared to their white counterparts. Deficiencies in treatment emerge in the documented low rate of success in drug addiction treatment outcomes, quality of service, and low satisfaction rates in service provision among minorities compared to white Americans. (Burlew, Weekes, Montgomery, Feaster &... Wu L., 2011, p. 326; Schmidt, Greenfield & Mulia, 2006, pg. 50-51). The results of the fight against addiction must include specialized treatment for racial/ethnic minorities. In this manner, the quality of services will correlate with the present narrative of achieving cultural competency and the American eagerness to fight against addiction efficiently.

The purpose of this study was to analyze changes in the racial profile of individuals admitted into opioid treatment programs certified by the Office of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Services (OASAS) in Western New York. The aim is to create awareness on the needs of minorities and to encourage the implementation of culturally sensitive treatment frameworks for all individuals suffering from addiction. Data were requested to the OASAS data management team.

**Faculty mentor: Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS**

Sara Mallaber

***Employee Health and Wellness Program***

**Abstract:**

Health and wellness programs are intended to create an overall healthy and productive lifestyle both in and outside the workplace. These programs can help improve one's emotional, mental, and physical wellbeing. Health and wellness programs can include but are not limited to, healthy eating, exercising, and practicing mindfulness. Research has shown that workplace wellness programs have the ability to lower healthcare costs, improve productivity, and reduce employee burnout.

Research collected in a survey shows that more than half of the participants believe that their health and wellness program is effective and that it helps sustain their health and wellbeing.

**Faculty mentor(s): Kristina M. Lantzky-Eaton, Ph.D. and Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS**

Ashley Martinez

***The Integration of Holistic Healthcare Methods in Modern Day Medicine to Reduce Costs***

**Abstract:**

Holistic health is best described as, “An approach to life. Rather than focusing on illness or specific parts of the body, this ancient approach to **health** considers the whole person and how he or she interacts with his or her environment. It emphasizes the connection of mind, body and soul.” (medical dictionary. 2016). Not only will society members utilize holistic health care methods for the medical benefits, but cost is a main reason as well. Before pharmaceutical companies and clinical healthcare systems dominated the healthcare world, holistic healthcare healers recognized the importance of emotional and spiritual wellbeing in achieving physical health. The largest medical budget in the history of the world lies at \$1.2 trillion per year which is controlled by powerful interests who have a drug for every symptom and multiple drugs for every symptom (Tim O’Shea 2016). Medical care can come with a large price tag; therefore exploring holistic healthcare methods to save money is beneficial. Using data collected in a survey of individuals who attended Buffalo’s Holistic Health Expo located at Buffalo’s Marcy Casino, this descriptive research examined the knowledge that individuals have behind holistic healthcare along with price data in relation to pharmaceuticals purchased by the individual. . Results show that both male and female respondents engage in holistic healthcare methods, and the average age of respondents who engage in some type of holistic healthcare is 50 years old. The average amount spent on pharmaceuticals among 69 respondents, both male and female within one year is \$942.13.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Steven Wischmann, M.A. and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

***Opiate Epidemic and the Narcan Response***

**Abstract:**

The goal of the research is to seek effectiveness in reversing overdoses in individuals and who is more effective in using the overdose reversal drug Narcan. Paid EMS/First Responder Service or Volunteer/First Responder Service. The researcher hopes to look at data from Erie County police departments, the Erie County Health Department and various EMS agencies. The researcher looks to compare calls between the two groups and see where responses and reversals of overdoses are most successful. Success is based off of who is reversing more overdoses using Narcan. The researcher hopes that by finding the shortfall between the two groups, resources and funding can be better allocated to help fill these.

**Faculty mentor(s):Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Amber L. Moore

***Technological Influence on Daily Work Activity***

**Abstract:**

Technology is having a profound influence on people around the world today. This ranges from young adolescents to adults of all ages. It is causing people to be more distracted than they ever have been before. One area that is currently struggling with the advancement of technology such as cell phones is work environments. The focus of this study was to find out how much people use their cell phones while at work and what they are using them for. Participants were asked about if they feel they could complete other tasks if they are not constantly distracted by technology. Previous research has shown that overuse of technology such as cell phones can influence ones health and their ability to focus or refocus on a task after an interruption. There are also legal issues that go along with technology use as well that relates to work and the use of social media. There are multiple solutions to help reduce the overuse of technology in work environments and in one's own personal life. Employers have multiple solutions that they can enact in the workplace and individuals themselves can also set technology boundaries for themselves if they feel that technology is having a negative influence on their life.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Aimee Gomlak and Dr. Brian Poliner**



Cassandra Moss

***Recidivism Among Defendants with Opioid Addiction Who Post Bail in Erie County, NY***

**Abstract:**

The United States is entrenched in an opioid epidemic. Previous research has indicated a relationship between drug use and criminal activity. Erie County, NY is no exception to the national opioid epidemic or the affects it has on crime in our community. All United States citizens are entitled to bail. Bail can be release on recognizance (ROR) or a monetary surety to guarantee the defendant's return to all scheduled court dates. With opioid abuse on the frontlines of our current drug war in Erie County, NY it is imperative to understand re-arrest rates among defendants who abuse opioids and post bail so that policies and punitive alternatives can be put in place to improve outcomes of those suffering from addiction. This study is a cross sectional design using official data from the Erie County Sheriff's Office. Utilizing a number of variables, commonalties will be determined among offenders as well as re-arrest rates among defendants who are known to abuse opioids.

**Faculty mentor(s):Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

Emily Mueller

***A Program Evaluation of the Community Eligibility Provision in a Western New York School District***

**Abstract:**

The Community Eligibility Provision was established under the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, an extension of the National School Lunch Program. This act expanded school meal programs by providing free meals to all students in high poverty school districts regardless of students' individual socioeconomic status. This study was conducted in the Cuba-Rushford School District utilizing a mixed methods approach including data from a cafeteria database and survey results from two surveys distributed to students and faculty. In total two hundred twenty nine students participated in a survey about their opinions of school meals, 36 (15.86%) were in 12<sup>th</sup>-grade, 70 (30.84%) were in 10<sup>th</sup>-grade, 23 (10.13%) were in 8<sup>th</sup>-grade, 44 (19.38%) were in 7<sup>th</sup>-grade and 54 (23.79%) were in 5<sup>th</sup>-grade. Faculty was also encouraged to answer a survey about their observations and opinions of the program, fifty-three faculty members participated. An independent t-test was calculated to compare the average number of meals served between the two years. It was determined that, the average number of meals served in the 2015/2016 school year ( $M = 132.32$ ,  $SD = 74.57$ ) was significantly less,  $t(1,368) = -35.95$ ,  $p < .001$  than the number of meals served in the 2016/2017 school year ( $M = 322.94$ ,  $SD = 117.48$ ). Over the course of the 2 years examined, there was an increase in the total number of meals served, 231.82% in the Elementary School and 51.12% in the Middle/High School. The Community Eligibility Provision was established due to changing socioeconomic conditions, to combat childhood hunger, and ensure that all students at school have access to healthy meals.

**Faculty mentors: Professor Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS and Professor Aimee Gomlak**

### ***Juvenile Detention Alternatives Initiative: Race and Crime***

#### **Abstract:**

According to Sentencingproject.org, between 2003 and 2013 (the most recent data available), the rate of youth committed to juvenile facilities after an adjudication of delinquency fell by 47 percent) (Rovner, 2016). Statistics indicate that though Whites make up roughly three-quarters the American population, Black youths account for most crimes committed. Between 2003 and 2013, the racial gap between Black and White youth in secure detention increased by 15% (Rovner, 2016). We can argue that this is one of the most serious issues facing the juvenile justice system. This research uses the General Strain Theory to explain why this issue is occurring and steps that could be made towards improvements. This paper concludes by discussing the correlation between race and crime among Erie County, New York youth. The current findings demonstrated no statistically significant difference between race and offense types. These findings strongly supports the null hypothesis of *no differences* between race and offense committed. The researcher's hypothesis in this study was not supported. Based on Pearson Correlation test, there is a weak and non-significant relationship between race and offense types. If there is no significant difference then race should not be a factor. It has been proven that racial disparity is not a factor in sentencing juveniles.

**Faculty mentor(s):Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane**

Michele Noto

***NFTA Citizen's Police Academy: Attitudes of Participants***

**Abstract:**

The relationship between law enforcement and society has been strained. During recent years, American police agencies have received a great deal of negative coverage by the media that has depicted violent police actions against community members that they are sworn to protect. The purpose of this study was to examine the impact that the Niagara Frontier Transportation Authority Citizens/Youth Police Academy had on attitudes regarding law enforcement by participants of a Citizen Police Academy.

**Faculty mentor(s):Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane**

### *Electoral College Reform*

#### **Abstract:**

Prior to 2016, a clear majority of Americans favored amending the United States Constitution to replace the Electoral College with a popular vote system (Tarrance, 2013). Data has shown that during the 1967-2000 time period, support for eliminating the Electoral College never dropped below 57%, and depending on how the question was worded, as much as 80% of the public favored a constitutional amendment (Panagopoulos, 2004). In Gallup polls taken in 2000, 2004, and 2011, support to abolish the Electoral College hovered around 60%. Further, in four out of the five instances (1876, 1888, 2000, and 2016) where the candidate won the Electoral College, but not the popular vote-the Republican nominee was the winner. In the 1824 election, Andrew Jackson won a plurality of the popular and electoral vote, but was short of an electoral majority. In turn, the election was decided by the House of Representatives, who chose runner-up John Quincy Adams (Pew Research Center, 2016). In the aftermath of the 2016 election, the percentage of Republicans wanting to replace the Electoral College with the popular vote has dropped significantly. Nineteen percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents favor replacing the Electoral College with the popular vote, down from 49% in 2004 and 54% in 2011. Eighty-one percent of Democrats and Democrat-leaning independents favor basing the winner on the popular vote, up from 73% in 2004 and 69% in 2011 (Tarrance, 2013). For the first time in the 49 years that Gallup has asked about the Electoral College, less than half of Americans want to replace the Electoral College with a popular vote system. It seems that the American population is now and for the first time, sharply divided on doing away with the Electoral College. The results of prior research regarding familiarity with the Electoral College indicate that though many Americans may have heard the terminology, Electoral College or Electoral College reform, that a large contingent of Americans are unfamiliar (McKenzie, 2009).

The project sought to analyze demographic characteristics associated with opinions and familiarity with the Electoral College system. The data obtained specifically looked at a sample of New York State registered voters.

**Faculty mentors: Dr. Brian Poliner and Dr. Dana Bagwell**

Melanie Palmer

***Domestic Violence Within the Military***

**Abstract:**

The significance of the study is to determine whether or not domestic violence does or does not occur more frequently in the military than in civilian communities. And if it does occur more, try to give data towards the question of why it occurs more. Domestic violence is very different in the military than in civilian communities, individuals who are the victims of domestic violence don't go to authorities in fear that there will be several repercussions, not only harm against them from the perpetrator, but also fear of their former or current spouse or significant other losing their job, being demoted, which would result in a pay decrease, which leads to financial struggles and strain putting not only the victim in a harsh situation but children that may be involved as well.

**Faculty mentor(s):Dr. Martin Floss and Dr. Kathleen Pierino**

Gregory Proga

***Recidivism and Gun Violence***

**Abstract**

The purpose of this research is to identify prime factors between recidivism and gun violence. Factors can involve an individual's age, race or gender. When dealing with recidivism and gun violence it is important to examine factors in an offender's life. Some examples of some factors can be history of violent behavior, Drug or alcohol abuse and one's mental state. The purpose of this examination is to not excuse criminal behavior but to help explain it.

**Mentor: Dr. Martin Floss and Professor John Culhane**

Miranda L. Riexinger

***Reunification Programs; Expectations of Child Welfare and Parents***

**Abstract:**

The purpose of the study was to find out if the internal systems of public and non-profit agencies across U.S. have an influence on each other and to determine if this influence has any association that with the fatalities of children in that state. Child safety is the overarching goal of all child welfare agencies and initiatives, such as state and federal funding, grants and all other sources of funding geared toward prevention and intervention for at risk families.

Secondary data analyses were conducted on three data sets to determine associations between two variables in each set. Data was collected by four states concerning children or families who were funded under a community based family resource grant, as well as other funders for fiscal year 2015. States that had more screening and intake staff had less fatalities, states with more screening and intake staff had quicker response time, and states with quicker response time had lower fatalities reported. This indicates that there may be an association between the number of intake staff to fatalities and response times as well as response times to child fatality rates across the nation.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS and Dr. Dana Bagwell**



***Parental Monitoring of Foods and Activities Related to Childhood Obesity***

**Abstract:**

Childhood obesity is continually increasing around the world in outrageous rates. This is one of the most serious health concerns among children in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the United States 34 percent of children are considered obese. There are many implications of why the rates of childhood obesity is increasing. Whether it is the amount and types of food the children are eating, the lack of aerobic exercise or the amount of parental monitoring of the child. This study was conducted to find out the relationship between childhood obesity and if it influences how much the parent monitors the child to try and reverse the epidemic. If there was a way to improve the overall health of children and educate families, this could help decrease the rates. There are many health problems that are associated with obesity such as, cardiovascular issues, sleep apnea, lower back problems, fatty liver disease, asthma and much more. It is estimated that 42 million children globally, under the age five years old are overweight. In this study, surveys were distributed to a local dental office in Cheektowaga, New York and local medical office in Buffalo, New York. The surveys asked questions about the demographics of the child and parent, socio-economic status, household income, family type and how close the parent monitored the child's aerobic exercises and food patterns. The results of the survey showed that the more closely the parent monitored the child the healthier the child was versus a parent who let the child eat what they wanted and played if they wanted to. Overall, the need for a decrease in childhood obesity needs to happen. More education to the parents, children at schools and home can come into play as a way to help the world see the bigger picture. As the results showed, the more the parent is involved in the child's life the healthier that child is or will become.

**Faculty mentor(s): Dr. Yvonne Downes and Aimee Gomlak MBA**

*Assessment of the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act*

**Abstract:**

In 1988, Congress enacted the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA). This law was passed to provide Indian tribes resources for self-determination and economic self-sufficiency. IGRA divided gaming into three classes with Class III being traditional Vegas style gaming. IGRA created the framework for Indian tribes and states to compact in order to have Class III gaming. In the 30 years since IGRA was passed, there have been several court cases that have changed how IGRA is applied. The most notable was the Florida v Seminole decision of 1996. A search of the literature indicated that since the Seminole Decision states had been requesting revenue sharing in order to compact.

A research study of the Tribe-State Compacts was conducted. The study examined compacts that were passed in the early Nineties and were amended within the past 15 years. The changes in the compacts were observed.

**Faculty mentor(s): Prof. Steven Wischmann, Dr. Brian Poliner**

Carly Elizabeth Spencer

***Perceptions of Communication Competency in Relation to Employee Job Satisfaction in Non-Profit Health Care Agencies in the United States***

**Abstract:**

Communication is essential throughout all parts of a non-profit organization and communication between management and staff is vital in employees' level of job satisfaction. The objective of this research study was to examine the relationship of employee job satisfaction and the perception of effective communication within the examined agency. This research explored different methods of communication, communication traits, employee job satisfaction, and environments where communication was crucial to employee job satisfaction. Surveys were administered within the Residential Services department at Suburban Adult Services, Inc.; a midsized non-profit agency in Western New York, United States. The voluntary and anonymous surveys were physically distributed at site staff meetings. Direct support staff ( $n = 55$ ) responded to multiple questions of their perceptions of effective communication and a question of their level of job satisfaction. Managers ( $n = 12$ ) responded to questions that were worded the same as the staff survey; however, the questions were asked with "I" statements and the managers self-reported their own communication competency. A statistical analysis was completed and determined that there was a moderately positive correlation between staff's perception of communication competency of management and their level of staff job satisfaction. An independent t-test assuming unequal variances was conducted and did not indicate significant differences of the perceptions of manager communication competency between staff and management,  $t(24) = 0.11, p = .458$ . This information will benefit non-profit agencies when examining communication training methods and ways to increase employee job satisfaction.

**Faculty mentor(s): Stacey Gura, MPA and Dr. Brian Poliner**

Teresa G. Vincent

*Training Medical Students for End of Life*

**Abstract:**

The practice of modern medicine may prolong duration of life but has a limited capacity to understand a patient's holistic needs as life ends. Despite the goal of providing effective communication around EoL care, medical staff often face barriers in providing communication that meets non-clinical needs. EoL doulas, modeled on the services to assist women through child birth, are trained to provide necessary emotional and social support for patients and caregivers. Training medical students in EoL doula care could be a way to reduce identified care barriers and improve quality of dying.

This research project analyzed the effectiveness of EoL doula training provided to first- and second-year medical students to increase comfort navigating EoL care discussions with their patients as determined through measuring death competency. The training was provided to medical students at the University at Buffalo through the Erie County Medical Center's department of palliative medicine. The study used a pretest - posttest comparison utilizing Bugen's Coping with Death Scale to assess death competency. In the pretest phase this survey was provided to the general population of first- and second-year medical students ( $N = 51$ ) to develop a baseline of data on comfort with discussing EoL options. Of the 4 students who completed both the pretest and the posttest, all posttest scores showed an increase over the pretest, with an average increase of 24.

While the final posttest sample size is too small to draw a statistically valid conclusion for this presentation, there does appear to be a positive trend which may be validated in future research.

**Faculty mentor(s): Steven Wischmann, mentor and Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS, second reader**

***Patient-Centered Health Care: Staff Perceptions of Patient-Centered Care in a Home Health Care Agency***

**Abstract:**

Historically, health care has been structured around the needs of the physician and the organization delivering the care rather than the patient. Recent trends in health care show a shift in the way care is delivered, an improvement in the quality of care provided and indicates a new importance for delivering care that is patient-centered. Patients must be listened to, informed, respected and involved in their own health care. Home health care agencies are an integral component of the continuum of care that often service the aging population and individuals with disabilities. Amedisys, Inc., a leading provider of home health care, is working to better assist their clients by implementing chronic condition management into their patient-centered care delivery routine and emphasizing the importance of patient empowerment. Amedisys, Inc. is one of the first home health care agencies that implements and facilitates Patient Empowerment Programs. Patient Empowerment Programs educate patients, families and caregivers while simultaneously providing them with the resources needed to adequately manage the patient's chronic condition(s). Studies on staff perceptions of patient-centered care have been limited. This study's research looks at staff perceptions of patient-centered care and staff perceptions of Amedisys' unique Patient Empowerment Programs. Study eligibility criteria included participants who were employed at the Amherst, New York (NY) location of Amedisys, Inc. and were 18 years of age and older. The study elicited 54 survey responses ( $N = 54$ ) with survey questionnaires consisting of 17 questions. Furthermore, four designated employees participated in individual interviews consisting of five questions. Results suggested that Amedisys' staff were highly familiar with the term and concept of patient-centered care and indicated the agency's Patient Empowerment Programs were effective.

**Faculty mentor(s): Professor Kathryn Regan Eskew, MS and Dr. Caitlin Szalkowski**