



**FY 2026
CHHS RESEARCH**



FLASH TALKS



OCTOBER 30, 2025


Guyon Auditorium

**GRADUATE STUDENT
POSTERS**

3:00 pm - 3:30 pm

**LIGHTNING TALKS & 3MT
COMPETITION**

3:30 pm - 5:00 pm



SOUTHERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY CARBONDALE
**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND
HUMAN SCIENCES**

Poster Presentation...*At a glance!*

No.	Lead Presenter	Presentation Title
Psychological and Behavioral Sciences		
1	Emily Murray	Which Mistakes Matter More? The Impact of Commission and Omission Errors in DRO
2	Laurent Orozco-Barrios	Incorporating Naturalistic Signals of Unavailability into Treatment of Challenging Behavior
3	Nhi Nguyen	Assessing the Impact of the Differential Outcomes Procedure on the Acquisition of Auditory-Visual Conditional Discriminations
4	Seema Brimmer	Promoting Generalization Within a Functional Communication Training and Schedule Thinning Treatment for Attention-Maintained Challenging Behavior
5	Aimee Hild	Parametric Evaluation of Treatment Integrity Level During DRO
6	Lynn Schumacher	How Many Exemplars is Sufficient? Effects of MET on Generalization Outcomes
Human Sciences		
7	Madison Watson	Mutual Quality of Life in Primary Progressive Aphasia

Lightning Talks and 3MT Competition...*At a glance!*

No.	Lead Presenter	Presentation Title
Aviation		
1	Irene Miller	From Brainwaves to Runways: Neurocognitive Readiness for Pilots
2	Amy Rutledge	AviateOK as a Catalyst for Career Exploration: An Empirical Study of Middle School Engagement in Aviation and Aerospace Fields
3	Gail Avendano	A Comparison of the Success of Ab-initio and Transfer Private Pilots at Southern Illinois University Carbondale: Revisiting a 2008 Study
Psychological and Behavioral Sciences		
4	Heekyung Lee	Skills Improvement on Emotion Regulation for Adults (SIERA)
5	You Jung Choi	Few Good Friends or Many Toys? Children's Views on Happiness
6	Lesley Shawler	Incorporating Common Signals of Unavailability into Treatment of Destructive Behavior
7	* Jessica Hinojosa	Improving Sleep in Children with Autism Utilizing a Brief, Caregiver-Focused Intervention: A Feasibility Study
8	Mary Louise Cashel	Safe Schools: Training Bus Drivers in Bullying Prevention, Threat Assessment and Crisis Intervention
9	Michael Hylin	Earlier is not Always Better: A Pre-clinical Look at Juvenile Traumatic Brain Injury
10	* Julian Cifuentes	Larger, No Matter What: Insensitivity to Punishment for Choice of a Larger Reinforcer over a Smaller Predicts Lower Delay Discounting of the Same Larger Reinforcer
11	Lillian Masek	The Embedded Learner: Infant Development in a Social and Physical Environment
12	Maria Aparcero Suero	Too Many False Alarms? Optimizing the M-FAST for Real-World Forensic Practice
13	* Connor Watkinson	Beyond the Mozart Effect: Addressing Inconsistent Replication by Unifying Theories and Identifying Key Moderators

Automotive		
14	Sean Boyle	Development of a Semi-portable Solar Electric Vehicle Charging System
Human Sciences		
15	Justin McDaniel	Evaluation of a National Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Rehabilitation Program in Veterans Affairs
16	Zhijing Chen	A Mixed-methods Study of NBA and WNBA TikTok Content and Fan Interactions
17	*Olusoji Samuel Ibukun	Adolescent Perceptions and Use of E-Cigarettes as Smoking Cessation Tools and for Pleasure: Data Analysis from National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023
18	Wasantha Jayawardene	Do Harsher Federal Drug Penalties Curb Overdose Fatalities?
19	Kathryn Roosevelt	Pre-Retirement Planning and the Retirement Experience: A Qualitative Pilot Study
20	* Chesmi Kumbalataru	Chronic Pain Conditions and Over-the-Counter Analgesic Purchases in U.S. Households: An Analysis of Nielsen-Kilts Ailment and Consumer Panel Data (2023)
Justice and Public Safety		
21	Raymund Narag	Voices from Within: Narratives of Persons with Lived Experiences (PLEs) in the Philippine Criminal Justice System"
22	Tammy Kochel	Officer Perspectives on Hot Spots Policing: Implications for Implementation and Sustainability
23	* Adonis Ndusha	Polyvictimization among Veterans in American Prisons

* 3 Minute Thesis

Abstracts

Poster Presentations

1. Which Mistakes Matter More? The Impact of Commission and Omission Errors in DRO.

Emily Murray

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Co-presenter: Paige O'Neill, Ph.D., BCBA

Differential reinforcement of other behavior (DRO) is a strategy commonly used in clinical contexts to reduce challenging behavior. Prior research suggests that behavioral treatments with occasional errors may still be efficacious, but the relative impact of integrity errors which are possible in DRO remains largely unexplored. This study compared the impact of two types of treatment integrity errors on target responding in a human operant arrangement. Clicking on a moving button served as the target response and proxy for challenging behavior. Rate of target responding was compared across four conditions: baseline, 100% integrity, DRO with commission errors, and DRO with omission errors. On average, omission errors were slightly more detrimental to treatment outcomes than commission errors. These findings may inform future evaluations of DRO under conditions of reduced treatment integrity and contribute to a better understanding of how to arrange effective DRO interventions in applied contexts.

2. Incorporating Naturalistic Signals of Unavailability into Treatment of Challenging Behavior.

Laurent Orozco-Barrios

Graduate Student, School of Psychological and Behavioral Sciences

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Co-presenters: Lesley Shawler, BCBA., Ph.D., Seema Brimmer, M.A., Aimee Hild, B.S., Caitlyn Kleiss.

Multiple schedules are a common method to teach appropriate delay tolerance which relies on certain signals to indicate when a specific outcome (e.g., access to a toy) may or may not be available. Naturalistic signals are advantageous as they can minimize the reliance on extra materials and may be viewed more positively within the family's everyday routines. The purpose of this study was to identify naturalistic signals in the family's environment for a 4-year-old child with autism, that symbolized the unavailability of a preferred item that could be applied to the individual's routines. The results obtained from two functional analyses showed the highest rates of challenging behavior occurred when the child was denied access to the toy or it was delayed. The treatment included functional communication training followed by decreasing the availability of the items using a multiple schedule with naturalistic signals adapted to a clinical context to promote generalization to the child's everyday environments.

3. Assessing the Impact of the Differential Outcomes Procedure on the Acquisition of Auditory-Visual Conditional Discriminations.

Nhi Nguyen

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Co-presenter: Dr. Paige O'Neill

The differential outcomes procedure (DOP) is a teaching approach in which each correct response is paired with a unique reinforcer that is specifically linked to a discriminative stimulus. Research has shown that this method leads to faster learning relative to reinforcement-as-usual. The current study examined the relative impact of the DOP and reinforcement-as-usual on receptive language skills in three children with autism, utilizing an adapted alternating treatments design embedded within a multiple baseline across comparisons design. Results showed that two out of three participants demonstrated faster acquisition and greater accuracy of skills in the DOP condition compared to the reinforcement-as-usual control condition. For one participant, both procedures were similarly efficacious. These findings suggest that the DOP may enhance instructional efficacy for some learners with autism. Future research should assess whether the procedure produces more efficient skill acquisition when applied to other skills and with varied reinforcer types.

4. Promoting Generalization Within a Functional Communication Training and Schedule Thinning Treatment for Attention-Maintained Challenging Behavior.

Seema Brimmer

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Co-presenter: Laurent Orozco-Barrios, M.S.

Functional communication training (FCT) is an evidence-based procedure to reduce challenging behavior (Tiger et al., 2008) by replacing them with a simple request that produces the same result. This study used FCT to teach a 5-year-old child with autism to appropriately request attention from his caregivers and clinicians while teaching him that challenging behavior would no longer produce attention. After the child requested consistently, the clinicians reduced the amount of attention provided by denying attention for increasing time periods to mirror everyday conditions. We compared two different methods of signaling to the child when requests for attention would be honored or denied: common environmental and arbitrary signals. Results showed that arbitrary cues were most successful at maintaining consistent use of the request while simultaneously reducing challenging behavior. Caregivers were successfully trained to implement the procedures in different contexts to promote generalized use.

5. Parametric Evaluation of Treatment Integrity Level During DRO.

Aimee Hild

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Co-presenter: Dr. Paige O'Neill

Differential reinforcement of other behavior (DRO) is a strategy commonly used to address challenging behavior but can be difficult to implement with high treatment integrity. Previous research has shown that treatment effects can be observed with occasional treatment integrity errors, however due to limited research, the impact of various degrees of treatment integrity on outcomes of DRO is still unclear. The purpose of the current study was to conduct a parametric analysis of treatment integrity level (100%, 80%, 60%, 40%, 20%) in DRO in a human operant arrangement using a multiple treatments reversal design. Results indicated that, on average, the DRO procedure was efficacious at 100%, 80%, and 60% treatment integrity and inefficacious at 40% and 20% treatment integrity. Results will inform future evaluations of treatment integrity errors in DRO and support effective and efficient implementer training practices.

6. How Many Exemplars is Sufficient? Effects of MET on Generalization Outcomes

Lynn Schumacher

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A marker of successful behavior change in applied behavior analysis is generalization of treatment effects. Some strategies provided to promote generalization include multiple exemplar training (MET) which uses several examples of a teaching target (Stokes and Baer, 1977). Research has shown that it is effective in teaching novel targets, but few have looked at how it influences generalization outcomes. The current research assessed the effect of MET on generalization outcomes by comparing three sets of learning targets across six generalization factors while measuring teaching duration. Three students diagnosed with autism were taught to label three sets of animal groups (e.g., pod of dolphins), across different numbers of target examples (i.e., 1, 3 or 5). Results found that one example promoted generalization for all students while also requiring the shortest teaching duration. This suggested that MET may not be required for generalization to be achieved, but further replication is required.

7. Mutual Quality of Life in Primary Progressive Aphasia

Madison Watson

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Previous research indicates that primary progressive aphasia (PPA) can have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of both the individual and those serving as caregivers. The goal of this study is to examine the effects of 10 weekly therapy sessions, and the provision of educational resources on the dyad's quality of life. The dyad in this study is a couple in their 70s, one with semantic primary progressive aphasia, and her husband, her primary caregiver. The dyad completed 6 assessments at 3 time points (therapy beginning, therapy end, and 12 weeks post-therapy end) to assess treatment efficacy. Cohen's D was used to calculate the effect size, assessing the mutual quality of life and perceived stress of the couple. Subjective data suggests that the couple benefits from therapy, the resources provided, and continued education on the nature and status of the person's progressive aphasia.

Lightning Talks

1. From Brainwaves to Runways: Neurocognitive Readiness for Pilots

Irene Miller

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Co-presenter: Steve Goetz

The SIU School of Aviation, in collaboration with Aptima and the Stanford University School of Medicine, is conducting research to evaluate the fORE (fNIRS Operational Readiness Estimation) technology suite in flight training environments. Developed by Aptima, fORE integrates the MAVERIC fNIRS sensor to monitor pilot cognitive load in real time. SIU student pilots and instructors will wear the MAVERIC sensor during training flights to collect neurocognitive data. Stanford University researchers will apply fNIRS hyperscanning to analyze brain activity between the flight student and instructor, assessing fORE's operational validity and its potential to support adaptive flight training. This study aims to advance cognitive monitoring techniques to increase pilot readiness and training effectiveness.

2. AviateOK as a Catalyst for Career Exploration: An Empirical Study of Middle School Engagement in Aviation and Aerospace Fields

Amy Rutledge

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STEM industries promote innovation and economic growth, making early investment in education essential to prepare a future-ready workforce. The aviateOK STEM application, created by the Department of Aviation and Space Education at Oklahoma State University, provides free, engaging resources for K–12 students to explore aviation pathways. This study assesses how aviateOK influences middle school students' interest in aviation STEM careers. Conducted with 8th graders at Carbondale Middle School, the project will include two classroom sessions to introduce aviation careers and give deeper insights into various pilot roles. Through interactive, student-centered instruction, the study will evaluate how effectively aviateOK raises awareness and sparks curiosity about aviation professions. The findings will help guide future outreach efforts and contribute to broader discussions about connecting students with STEM career opportunities.

3. Comparison of the Success of Ab-initio and Transfer Private Pilots at Southern Illinois University Carbondale: Revisiting a 2008 Study

Gail Avendano

Assistant Professor, School of Aviation

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Co-presenter: Kenneth Wilkins

This research revisits a study that examined the outcomes of students who began instrument training at Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) between fall 1998 and summer 2003. That study, which was published in 2008, compared the success rates of ab-initio students, defined as those students who completed all of their flight training at SIUC; and transfer flight students, those who were admitted into the program already having completed a Private Pilot Certificate. The study also compared the effectiveness of having transfer flight students complete proficiency training prior to beginning flight training at SIUC versus those who did not—referred to as “direct entry” transfer students (Robertson & Harrison, 2008).

4. Skills Improvement on Emotion Regulation for Adults (SIERA)

Heekyung Lee

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Emotion regulation plays a central role in individuals’ mental health and psychosocial adjustment in life. The current research adapted dialectical behavior therapy emotion regulation skills training and implemented an 8-week group program, which is originally tailored for autistic young adults. This program is called Skills Improvement on Emotion Regulation for Adults (SIERA), which was developed with the feedback from autistic young adults and the stakeholders to teach adaptive emotion regulation skills. SIERA was implemented in a total of 19 autistic young adults and 3 student veterans as of 2025. Results indicated that SIERA was an efficacious intervention for autistic young adults and student veterans in terms of improving emotion regulation skills. However, further modification may need to be considered for different target populations.

5. Few Good Friends or Many Toys? Children’s Views on Happiness

You Jung Choi

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Children’s happiness is a key indicator of developmental achievements, particularly in socio-emotional and moral domains (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005), and both social relationships and material possessions make significant contributions. However, how these two factors actually contribute to children’s happiness, and how they may differ in their influence, remains unclear. This study investigates the role of friends in children’s happiness and compares it with the role of material possessions. Specifically, we ask whether children view happiness as more dependent on the number and quality of friends or on the number and quality of toys. For instance, do children consider a few “good” friends more valuable than many “okay” friends, and do they apply the same reasoning to toys? By addressing these questions, this research aims to illuminate how children balance social and material sources of happiness and to shed light on the developmental trajectory of subjective well-being. Findings will deepen our understanding of children’s happiness and its underlying mechanisms.

6. Incorporating Common Signals of Unavailability into Treatment of Destructive Behavior

Lesley Shawler

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A common phenomenon when treating challenging behavior is for the behavior to reemerge after a previous elimination (i.e., lapse). Researchers have examined some potential methods to attempt to mitigate the likelihood of lapses of challenging behavior with one proposed solution to program for generalization within treatment development. Specifically, incorporating more common or relevant stimuli into the training context may increase the likelihood of behavior generalizing to the individual's home environment. These stimuli can then be used to teach children when their preferred outcomes are unavailable and may be viewed more favorably in their everyday environment. The purpose of this research is to teach children how to respond appropriately to delayed access to a desired outcome by using common environmental signals. Treatment outcomes will be evaluated with each child's caregiver, and at their homes, to evaluate the generalization of treatment effects beyond a controlled setting.

7. Improving Sleep in Children with Autism Utilizing a Brief, Caregiver-Focused Intervention: A Feasibility Study.

Jessica Hinojosa*

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Sleep is essential to promote healthy physiological, psychological, and academic functioning among children. Unfortunately, sleep disturbances are high among children with autism and likely produce cascading effects, negatively impacting caregivers' well-being and increasing stress. There are several well-supported behavioral sleep strategies caregivers implement to improve children's sleep; however, other pressing health concerns are prioritized and/or standard sleep treatments are time-consuming, costly, and difficult to access. Therefore, the present research aims to evaluate the feasibility of a 10-minute online sleep intervention for caregivers of children with autism. The intervention includes tailored recommendations on healthy children's sleep habits and strategies to reduce insomnia and bedtime resistance. Five caregivers completed online questionnaires pre- and post-intervention sessions. Preliminary findings demonstrated improvements in caregivers' sleep knowledge and their child's sleep habits. The brief nature of the intervention was well-accepted and has important implications for expanding the accessibility of behavioral sleep resources to other caregivers.

8. Safe Schools: Training Bus Drivers in Bullying Prevention, Threat Assessment and Crisis Intervention.

Mary Louise Cashel

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Our project provided training to school bus drivers and monitors, specifically those serving rural school districts in Southern Illinois, with a focus on bullying prevention, threat assessment, and crisis intervention. With funding from the Bureau of Justice Assistance, we partnered with the Jackson County Sheriff and offered structured school bus driver and monitor training workshops, incorporating the curriculum and materials in a toolkit disseminated by the National Center for Safe and Supportive Learning Environments. In this presentation we will discuss the perceptions of the training participants regarding frequent problems on the bus and their strategies for managing them. We will then briefly summarize the training content and their workshop evaluation ratings. We will conclude with our future directions.

9. Earlier is not Always Better: A Pre-clinical Look at Juvenile Traumatic Brain Injury

Michael Hylin

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One of the leading causes of death and disability in younger individuals is traumatic brain injury (TBI). Injuries often result in impairments that are reflected in deficits that persist throughout childhood and often into adulthood. These deficits can impair the ability to perform in the classroom and impact the ongoing process of development. Currently, there are no treatments available for addressing these deficits, and the long-term impact of TBI upon brain development is poorly understood. This talk will highlight recent research from our lab that utilizes models of TBI, demonstrating behavioral and physiological impairments similar to those observed in young children following injury. Our research has been aimed at the development of potential therapeutic strategies to improve function through understanding what mechanisms underlie the behavioral impairments. Through the use of pre-clinical research, we aim to develop novel treatments that will improve behavioral function.

10. Larger, No Matter What: Insensitivity to Punishment for Choice of a Larger Reinforcer over a Smaller Predicts Lower Delay Discounting of the Same Larger Reinforcer

Julian Cifuentes*

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Research on Delay-Discounting (DD) has demonstrated its generality and robustness for the understanding of impulsive choice and its relationship to poor health behaviors (e.g., smoking, risky sexual behaviors, gambling). DD has offered a conceptual and methodological framework to understand long-lasting effects of Early-life adversity (ELA) on impulsive choice. In non-human animals, ELA is associated with higher discounting of rewards in males but not females. However, there is a need to expand DD research to model real-world decision processes that incorporate negative consequences (i.e., delayed negative effects of smoking or diet-related problems). We tested the effects of ELA on the relationship between discounting of punishers (DPT) and rewards (DDT) on 58 Sprague-Dawley male and female rats. Results show that regardless of Early-life adversity and Sex choice of the larger reinforcer in DPT predicts choice of the larger reinforcer in DDT, except for males exposed to limited-bedding and nesting.

11. The Embedded Learner: Infant Development in a Social and Physical Environment

Lillian Masek

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This talk illustrates the embodied and embedded nature of infant language learning from a developmental systems perspective using an observational approach. Learning is embodied in that sense that infants are active in their own learning. Learning is embedded in the sense that infant learning occurs in the context of interactions with people, objects, and spaces of the environment. Recent findings and future directions will be shared.

12. Too Many False Alarms? Optimizing the M-FAST for Real-World Forensic Practice

Maria Aparcero Suero

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Accurately distinguishing genuine from feigned symptoms is essential in forensic settings, where such judgments affect legal outcomes and resource allocation. Screening measures like the Miller Forensic Assessment of Symptoms Test (M-FAST) are designed to help identify individuals who require a more thorough evaluation in a cost-effective way. Using archival data from 172 forensic psychiatric patients who completed the M-FAST and the Structured Interview of Reported Symptoms (SIRS/SIRS-2; a comprehensive symptom validity test), this study evaluated the classification accuracy of the M-FAST and how modifying the scoring might reduce false positives (FP) among forensic patients. The recommended M-FAST cutoff (≥ 6) showed high sensitivity (96%) but an excessive FP rate (76%). Removing items with low specificity and/or low discriminability reduced FP errors without sacrificing sensitivity. The 19- and 21-scoring versions offer a more efficient screening option that can reduce unnecessary comprehensive assessments and enhance confidence in detecting feigning among forensic patients.

13. Beyond the Mozart Effect: Addressing Inconsistent Replication by Unifying Theories and Identifying Key Moderators

Connor Watkinson*

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The "Mozart Effect" (listening to music enhances spatial reasoning) has produced inconsistent replication and confusion for 30 years. This study tested an integrated model measuring both emotional and neural mechanisms, along with previously unmeasured moderators. Undergraduate participants ($N = 162$) completed spatial-reasoning tests before and after an eight-minute listening session with Mozart, popular music, or white noise. Musical background, listening habits, mood, and music-evoked emotions were also recorded. No music condition outperformed white noise, raising concerns about its validity as a control. Individual variability also emerged. Peacefulness positively mediated performance changes, and nostalgia negatively mediated them. Years of musical training predicted improvement, while higher habitual listening correlated with declines; musicians showed performance decreases only at very high listening frequency. Mood and training effects were independent, indicating separate pathways. These findings support an integrated model where shared pitch-spatial neural substrates and mood/arousal interact with musical-experience moderators to explain changes in spatial reasoning.

14. Development of a Semi-portable Solar Electric Vehicle Charging System

Sean Boyle

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This flash talk will report the progress of developing, constructing, and implementing an off-grid EV battery charging system that occupies the space of a single parking spot at the Transportation Education Center. The project seeks to determine the usable EV range from solar power in the Southern Illinois Region. The summary will include costs, obstacles, and solar generation/vehicle range to date.

15. Evaluation of a National Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Rehabilitation Program in Veterans Affairs

Justin McDaniel

Associate Professor, School of Human Sciences

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In response to growing demand for rehabilitation services for traumatic brain injury (TBI) among service members and veterans (SMVs), the US Department of Veterans Affairs established a 5-site intensive evaluation and treatment (IETP) program with interdisciplinary providers. This presentation covers a 4-year mixed methods evaluation of IETP, including a (1) comprehensive characterization of the program using implementation science models, (2) longitudinal analysis of relevant TBI outcomes, and (3) structural equation model examining the association between service dosage and outcome trajectories. Evaluation results suggest that IETP provides evidence-based, comprehensive inpatient rehabilitation care – tailored to each individual patient – in accordance with existing guidelines for SMVs with a history of complex mild or moderate TBI, to improve higher level functioning, wellbeing, brain health, and military readiness. Furthermore, IETP yields significant improvements in TBI-related symptoms, even at six months post-discharge

16. A Mixed-methods Study of NBA and WNBA TikTok Content and Fan Interactions

Zhijing Chen

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The current study seeks to investigate the social media strategies utilized by the NBA and WNBA on TikTok and understand whether men's and women's professional sports leagues differ in their social media content approaches. Furthermore, we examine how content design contributes to differing engagement outcomes and driving fan interaction on TikTok. This research aims to offer insight into how social media can be leveraged to elevate underrepresented leagues. We used the TikTok Research API to systematically collect social media content from the official TikTok accounts of the NBA and the WNBA. We began with the analysis of quantitative variables to provide an overall view of each league's content output and audience interactions. In the second phase of analysis, we focused on qualitative data, including video description, voice to text, hashtags, and comments. Results and implications will be further presented.

17. Adolescent Perceptions and Use of E-Cigarettes as Smoking Cessation Tools and for Pleasure: Data Analysis from National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), 2011, 2015, 2019, and 2023

Olusoji Samuel Ibukun*

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This study examines adolescent e-cigarette use trends from 2011 to 2023 using National Youth Tobacco Survey data. Initially marketed as smoking cessation tools, e-cigarettes are now primarily used for recreation, driven by appealing flavors, peer influence, and aggressive marketing. Cross-sectional data from four survey years (2011, 2015, 2019, 2023) revealed a sharp decline in cessation-related use (6.95% in 2015 to 2.33% in 2023). In 2023, 38% of users expressed a desire to quit within 30 days, and 25% had attempted quitting at least 10 times. Flavored e-cigarette users were significantly more likely to consider quitting (OR = 2.64). Descriptive statistics and latent class analysis highlighted shifting motivations, with recreational use increasingly dominant. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions, stricter marketing regulations, and educational campaigns to address rising nicotine addiction and health risks among youth. E-cigarettes have evolved from cessation aids to recreational products, reshaping adolescent tobacco behavior.

18. Do Harsher Federal Drug Penalties Curb Overdose Fatalities?

Wasantha Jayawardene

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The intersection of federal sentencing patterns and drug overdose fatalities offers critical insights into the effectiveness of U.S. criminal justice responses to the opioid crisis. This study examines trends from 2020–2024 across all 94 federal judicial districts, integrating U.S. Sentencing Commission data with CDC's overdose mortality statistics. We assess whether the prevalence and severity of drug possession and drug trafficking sentences align with geographic variations in fatal overdoses, highlighting disparities in enforcement and public health outcomes. Preliminary findings reveal substantial heterogeneity: districts vary widely in case composition, sentencing length, and adherence to guideline ranges. For example, in the Southern District of Illinois, drug cases accounted for 42% of all sentences in 2024, compared to a 30% national average, with average trafficking sentences exceeding 100 months, which was significantly higher than the national average of 82 months, despite persistent regional overdose burdens. Implications for policy integration will be discussed.

19. Pre-Retirement Planning and the Retirement Experience: A Qualitative Pilot Study

Kathryn Roosevelt

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Retirement is a major life transition that extends beyond financial considerations to include psychological, social, and health-related dimensions. Although extensive research has examined financial preparedness, far less attention has been given to how pre-retirement planning influences older adults' physical and emotional well-being during the transition to retirement. This gap limits understanding of the non-financial factors that shape adjustment and quality of life in later years. Guided by Continuity Theory, this conceptual qualitative pilot study seeks to explore how pre-retirement planning, or the lack thereof, affects the maintenance of routines, identity, emotional health, physical activity, and adaptation in retirement. The project will employ semi-structured interviews and a phenomenological, thematic analytic approach with adults aged 55 and older who are approaching or have recently retired, with recruitment anticipated from Southern Illinois University retirees. As a conceptual pilot, the study aims to generate preliminary insights into how preparation and continuity of lifestyle contribute to well-being in later life. Findings will inform a larger-scale investigation and guide the development of equity-driven, prevention-focused interventions to promote healthy and adaptive retirement transitions.

20. Chronic Pain Conditions and Over-the-Counter Analgesic Purchases in U.S. Households: An Analysis of Nielsen-Kilts Ailment and Consumer Panel Data (2023)

Chesmi Kumbalataru *

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Chronic pain is common in the U.S., often managed with over-the-counter painkillers without medical oversight. This study uses NielsenIQ data to analyze how reported health conditions, whether self-identified or professionally diagnosed, affect household over-the-counter painkiller purchases across various ailment types and demographic groups. Results show over-the-counter painkiller purchases were largely symptom-driven, with headache products being the most commonly bought across all household types. Nearly one-third of single-member households bought headache painkillers, regardless of diagnosis, highlighting the role of perceived need. Females and older adults more often reported ailments in both pain-related and other conditions. Nonetheless, many households used over-the-counter painkillers without reporting any ailments. Findings suggest ailment diagnosis has little impact on over-the-counter painkiller use, highlighting the need for better public health messaging on safe self-medication. These insights can inform targeted education, labeling regulations, and policy interventions to support safer and more equitable pain management practices at the population level.

21. Voices from Within: Narratives of Persons with Lived Experiences (PLEs) in the Philippine Criminal Justice System.

Raymund Narag

Associate Professor, School of Justice and Public Safety

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Co-presenter: Nazareny Azinar

This presentation highlights the voices of Persons with Lived Experiences (PLEs) in the Philippine criminal justice system, bringing their narratives to a national conference with justice actors and community stakeholders. Drawing on in-depth interviews with at least 30 PLEs who endured incarceration ranging from five to thirty years and were released within the past five years, the study documents their challenges across the justice continuum—policing, courts, corrections, and reintegration. Thematic analysis reveals systemic issues, including prolonged pretrial detention, inequalities in bail, experiences of torture, medical neglect, and the structural barriers faced during community reintegration. By centering the lived realities of formerly incarcerated individuals, this initiative underscores the urgent need for reforms that address not only institutional inefficiencies but also the human costs of punitive practices. The presentation aims to foster dialogue between PLEs and justice stakeholders toward more humane, inclusive, and restorative approaches in Philippine criminal justice.

22. Officer Perspectives on Hot Spots Policing: Implications for Implementation and Sustainability

Tammy Kochel

Associate Dean, School of Justice and Public Safety

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Hot spots policing (HSP) is a widely-adopted and empirically-supported approach to reducing enduring crime problems at micro places. Research indicates that HSP reduces crime without producing long-lasting harm on public perceptions of police and may facilitate positive assessments of police. However, a study in Britain reported that officers implementing HSP felt resistant to the perceived reduced autonomy imposed on their activities by the strategy, felt less moral alignment with the police agency, and their sense of procedural justice from supervisors was dampened relative to peers who had not implemented HSP. They rightly asserted concern that these views could threaten implementation of HSP. The current study in the U.S. examines: (1) officers views about HSP, (2) assessments of the resources and community impact relative to the nature of activities they conducted in hot spots, and (3) explores how engaging in HSP relates to self-legitimacy, perceived effectiveness of police, and job satisfaction.

23. Polyvictimization among Veterans in American Prisons

Adonis Ndusha *

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Despite policies addressing sexual violence inside prisons, like the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), sexual victimization remains a common occurrence in prison environments, raising health and safety concerns for prisoners in general and incarcerated veterans in particular. In 2016, the Department of Justice estimated the veteran population to be around 107,400 individuals, nearly one-tenth of the US prison population, and that sexual victimizations occurred between 149,200 and 209,400.

Understanding the prevalence and risk factors is crucial in developing policies that mitigate sexual victimization for veterans. While previous research has highlighted the general factors that explain why inmates are sexually victimized based on general individual-level and institutional-level characteristics, current literature lacks a nuanced understanding of how those factors affect sexual victimization among incarcerated veterans more specifically. Our research explores how prevalent sexual victimization among incarcerated veterans is and offers a more holistic understanding of the factors exacerbating veterans' victimization during incarceration.

Note of Thanks!

CHHS would like to thank CHHS Research Committee members for their assistance coordinating the Flash Talks event!

Thank you!



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