

**Date: November 15, 2020**

**Ref: Nomination of paper: "Can a multilevel STI/HIV prevention strategy for high risk African American adolescents improve life satisfaction?"**

**To: Selection Committee Members**

As a life-time member of Eta Sigma Gamma and a career Health Educator, I would like to nominate the peer-reviewed, scientific publication noted above for the Dr. Ann E. Nolte Writing Award. It should be noted here that three of the co-authors should be considered members of Dr. Nolte's extended academic/professional family tree. Dr. Valois completed his B.S. degree at SUNY Brockport where Dr. Nolte, at one time, held a faculty position (with colleagues Bob Gold, Mary Sutherland, Dave Bedworth, Bill Zimmerli and Jim Eddy among others). At the University of Illinois, Dr. Valois was mentored by Dr. Bill Creswell who assisted Dr. Nolte on the School Health Education Study (SHES). Dr. Kerr was mentored at Ft. Valley State University by Dr. Zimmerli and at the University of South Carolina by Dr. Valois. Dr. Zullig was mentored at SUNY Plattsburgh by Dr. Bedworth and at the University of South Carolina by Dr. Valois.

This nominated journal article meets the requirements for the Dr. Ann E. Nolte Writing Award vis-à-vis the future of health education, specifically merging Health Education efforts with Positive Psychology for future effectiveness. Dr. Nolte was light-years ahead of her time via her interdisciplinary paper on the research area recognized as "neuropsychimmunology" that served as a precursor to the current field of study known as "positive psychology." Briefly explained, positive psychology is anchored to acceptance of one's past, excitement and optimism about one's future experiences, and a sense of contentment and well-being in the present. Component concepts are quality of life, life satisfaction, happiness, subjective well-being, contentment, and meaningful life.

Two of our most prominent scholars, Lawrence Green and Marshal Krueter in their classic textbook *Health Promotion Planning: An Educational and Environmental Approach* discuss Quality of Life in Phase 1, the Social Diagnosis. These scholars note that "Health Promotion might have instrumental value in reducing risks for morbidity and mortality, however its ultimate value lies in its contribution to the quality of life for those for whom it is intended. A true bottom line for health promotion depends on measuring advances in quality of life."

Although QOL can be measured objectively (e.g., income level, access to health care, etc.), life satisfaction (LS) is used as an indicator of subjective quality of life in the submitted paper/study owing to its extension beyond momentary affective life experiences that include a reflective and evaluative perspective of overall life. LS is defined as the subjective appraisal of an individual's overall quality of life and individuals evaluate the quality of their lives based on personal goals and objectives. Life satisfaction can also be framed as a global evaluation of how a person perceives the achievement of personal aspirations and LS may be indirectly influenced by affect. Researchers suggest that perceived LS is a neglected component of adolescent health promotion and education, assessment, and measurement, especially for African American youth.

This paper reports on the extension of Health Education/Health Promotion intervention effects (via Project iMPPACS) beyond the reduction of adolescent health risk behaviors to a pursuit of the effects on adolescent life satisfaction, a component of quality of life and applied positive psychology. Dr. Nolte's concepts on neuropsychimmunology took approximately 50 years to evolve. However, research teams

in the UK, Florida, Germany, Virginia, California, Hong Kong and South Carolina, among others are moving beyond conceptual, correlational and longitudinal studies and conducting health promotion/quality of life/life satisfaction intervention studies for children, adolescents and adults.

Promoting quality of life and addressing determinants of health and health disparities are two overarching national Healthy People (HP) 2020 goals from the United States Department of Health and Human Services. HP 2020 has added Adolescent Health; Health Related Quality of Life and Well-being; and Social Determinants of Health as new topic areas. Thus, methods for improving quality of life (QOL) among US adolescents are of increasing importance.

Project iMPPACS (an acronym representing project sites: in Macon, GA; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Atlanta, GA; Columbia, SC; and Syracuse, NY), was a longitudinal intervention assessing the effect of a communitywide mass media campaign to increase condom use and reduce sexual risk taking associated with STI/HIV. Project iMPPACS was a 2 (sexual risk reduction or general health intervention)  $\times$  2 (media present or media absent)  $\times$  5 (time: at recruitment and 3, 6, 12, and 18 months post-recruitment) randomized controlled intervention implemented in two northern and two southern mid-sized cities ( $N = 1,658$ , 60% female). All iMPPACS study participants also provided urine specimens to assess the presence of 3 prevalent sexually transmitted infections (STI) among adolescents: gonorrhea, chlamydia, and trichomoniasis at baseline, 6, 12 and 18 months with treatment provided for all participants testing positive for any STI.

The iMPPACS mass media intervention (TV and radio) focused on three themes aligned with the outcome variables: (1) condom use hinders sexual pleasure/creates a sense of safety; (2) waiting to initiate sex shows respect for one's partner; and (3) condoms are needed with all types of sexual partners. The media messages created for the iMPPACS intervention were culturally sensitive and developed by African American experts. It should be noted here that culturally sensitive health communications are more effective than culturally neutral health information.

I believe that Dr. Nolte and others would be pleased to see a Health Education/Health Promotion intervention measure morbidity such as STIs and HIV, a possible precursor to mortality, a reduction in health risk behaviors and the promotion of safer sex behavior. Moreover, she would be pleased to see this same study extend into the quality of life/subjective well-being/life satisfaction components of positive psychology and see future of Health Educators working with Positive Psychologists and other behavioral and medical health specialists for concerted efforts in advancing our field of study.

\*For review committee members not fully familiar with the positive psychology literature, the *Journal of Happiness Studies* is a premier publication in positive psychology and is devoted to scientific understanding of subjective well-being. Coverage includes both cognitive evaluations of life such as life-satisfaction, and affective enjoyment of life, such as mood level. According to the Journal Citation Reports, the *Journal of Happiness Studies* has a 2019 five-year impact factor of 3.379.

\*\*All of the co-authors on this paper have been contacted and have agreed to donate the cash prize back to the *Foundation for the Advancement of Health Education* should this paper be selected for the Dr. Ann E. Nolte Writing Award. Thank you for your time and consideration and for your service to the field of Health Education.

\*\*\* Zullig KJ, Valois RF, Hobbs GR, Kerr JC, Romer D, Carey MP, Brown LK, DiClemente RJ, Vanable PA (2020). Can a multilevel STI/HIV prevention strategy for high risk African American adolescents improve life satisfaction? *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 21 (2), 417-436. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-019-00084-z>