

Congregational Health Study

Summary Report

St. Paul's UMC

Conducted and prepared by:



Congregational Health Study

Dear Faith Leader:

This summary report is being provided to your church as a courtesy for participating in the Congregation Health Study carried out by the Physical Activity and Public Health Lab at Pennsylvania State University in University Park, PA. The Congregation Health Study is a survey of the beliefs and attitudes of congregants regarding the health environment of their church. The Congregation Health Study also examines the personal health characteristics of the survey respondents. The information contained within this report is for your church and does not reflect the aggregate data from all the churches that have participated in the study. Once the aggregate data has been compiled it will be analyzed and prepared for publication in a research journal. Neither your church, nor the individual respondents from your church, will be identifiable in the final research paper.

Thank you very much for participating in the study and we hope this information is useful to you in addressing the needs of your congregation.

Best regards,

Melissa Bopp

Director, Physical Activity and Public Health Lab

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Research Assistant

Who responded to the survey?

- There were 97 respondents from St. Paul's UMC to the survey.
- Most of the respondents (67%) were female.
- The majority (51%) of the respondents were 55 or older.
- Most respondents (98%) were Caucasian.
- Most of the respondents (70%) were married.
- Many respondents (75%) held a Bachelor's degree or higher.
- Most respondents (90%) said they were a formal member of the church.
- Most respondents (92%) indicated that they attended church at least once per week.
- Most respondents (78%) reported that they had been attending St. Paul's UMC for more than five years.



Are congregants aware of the health habits of others at their church?

- Some of the respondents (33%) stated they were aware of the lead pastor's health habits.
- Some of the respondents (32%) stated that they were aware of the health habits of other leaders in their church.
- Over half of the respondents (56%) stated they were aware of the health habits of other congregants.

Are congregants aware of church activities?

- Most respondents (94%) said they relied on the *weekly bulletin* as their main source of communication about church activities.
- Nearly all respondents (95%) said they were aware of the general activities going on in the church.
- Most of the respondents (75%) said they were aware of the health-related activities going on in the church.

Who influences the health beliefs of respondents?

- Some respondents (21%) agreed that the lead pastor influences the way they think about health.
- Some respondents (17%) agreed that other leaders in the church influenced the way they think about health.
- Over a third of respondents (37%) agreed that other congregants influence the way they think about health.
- Most of the respondents (87%) agreed that their family influences the way that they think about health.

Do respondents ever hear their lead pastor speak about health-related issues and do they ever speak to their lead pastor privately about their health?

- Some of the respondents (20%) said they sometimes heard the lead pastor speak about health at church events, services, or activities.
- Some respondents (15%) stated that they sometimes heard the lead pastor speak about health in relation to the Bible or to the Christian faith.
- A few of the respondents (9%) stated that they sometimes speak individually to the lead pastor about their personal health.

Do the health habits of the lead pastor influence the respondent's health habits? Whether the respondent would accept health advice from the lead pastor?

- Few of the respondents (6%) said that they agreed that the health habits of the lead pastor influences their own health habits.
- Some of the respondents (23%) said that they agreed that the health habits of the lead pastor influenced whether they would accept health advice from them.

Are respondents likely to participate in health-related activities or services at their church?

- Some of the respondents (39%) said they were likely to attend health-related programs or activities at their church.
- Some of the respondents (35%) stated they were likely to speak to the lead pastor about a personal health concern.
- Some of the respondents (36%) stated that they would likely accept and use health advice from the lead pastor.
- Some of the respondents (26%) said that they were likely to speak to other leaders in the church about a personal health concern.
- Some of the respondents (32%) said they would likely accept and use health advice from other leaders in the church.



The Health and Health-behaviors of the Congregation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) list obesity as a risk factor for diabetes, heart disease, and other chronic health conditions:

- Most of the respondents to the survey were overweight (33%) or obese (20%) according to their self-reported height and weight.

The CDC states that tobacco usage, especially smoking, harms nearly every organ of the body and can cause many diseases and reduce the health of tobacco-users in general:

- Nearly all of the respondents (98%) reported that they never use tobacco products.

The CDC states that excessive alcohol use can lead to increased risk of health problems such as injuries, violence, liver diseases, and cancer.

- Some of the respondents (36%) indicated that they consumed alcohol at least once/month.
- Most of the respondents (69%) reported drinking no more than 2 alcoholic beverages when they drink.

The CDC reports that 75% of our nation's healthcare spending is on the treatment of chronic health conditions, with 7 out of 10 yearly deaths attributed to a chronic health condition that is largely preventable. Respondents reported that they had been diagnosed with the following chronic health conditions (some of which can be heritable):

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| • Heart Disease – 11% | • Osteoporosis – 4% |
| • High blood pressure – 38% | • Cancer (any type) – 13% |
| • High cholesterol – 43% | • Lung disease (e.g., COPD, asthma) – 1% |
| • Diabetes – 7% | • Thyroid disorder – 21% |
| • Arthritis – 21% | • Depression or anxiety – 17% |

Over half of the respondents (59%) stated that their health was very good or excellent.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, chronic stress can lead to serious health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression, anxiety disorder, and other illnesses. More than half of the respondents (62%) said they were currently experiencing some stress in their life.



An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.

It is recommended that individuals participate in regular physical activity (e.g., walking, jogging, swimming, cycling) for the prevention and treatment of chronic health conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, osteoporosis, arthritis, and depression; as well to help maintain a healthy bodyweight. Additionally, it is suggested that individuals eat an abundance of fruits and vegetables to help reduce the risk of chronic diseases, including stroke and perhaps other cardiovascular diseases, and certain cancers.

The American College of Sports Medicine and the American Heart Association recommend that individuals participate in 30 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity (e.g., brisk walking, swimming, cycling) on five days of the week OR 20 minutes of vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise (e.g., jogging, heavy yard work, basketball) on three days of the week OR a combination of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic exercise during the week.

- Almost half of the respondents (49%) to the survey reported that they were meeting the current recommendations for physical activity participation.

The CDC recommends that, in general, individuals consume five or more servings of fruits and vegetables per day for health benefits.

- Just over half of the respondents (54%) reported that they were meeting the current recommendations for fruit and vegetable consumption.

Helpful Resources

Tobacco

National Tobacco Cessation Collaborative: www.tobacco-cessation.org/index.html

Alcohol

National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism: www.niaaa.nih.gov

Stress, Anxiety, and Depression

National Institute of Mental Health: www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml

National Alliance for Mental Illness: www.nami.org

Physical Activity

US Department of Health and Human Services: www.health.gov/paguidelines

Fruits and Vegetables

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.fruitsandveggiesmatter.gov