ABSTRACT

THESIS: Analysis of Health Promotion Data Obtained During the 2008 Indiana Special Olympics Games: A Comparison of Indiana and Non-Indiana Data

STUDENT: Josette M.K. Dudoit, RD, CD

DEGREE: Master of Science in Dietetics

COLLEGE: Applied Sciences and Technology

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The purpose of this investigation was to determine the health status of Indiana Special Olympics athletes who participated in Healthy Athletes® health screenings during 2008. Height, weight, body mass index (BMI), bone density t-scores, smoking habits, and eating behaviors of the Indiana Special Olympics athletes, both overall and by gender, were compared to data recorded in the National Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® Software System (HASS). A total of 743 Special Olympics athletes ranging in age from 19 to 64 years were obtained from the HASS data base. Of these, 34.6 percent (n=257) were Indiana Special Olympics athletes and 65.4 percent (n=486) were non-Indiana Special Olympics athletes from California, Connecticut, Florida, Louisiana, and Montana. Results indicated that, despite no difference by gender or height, Indiana Special Olympics athletes were significantly more overweight (26.8%) or obese (50.3%), had a lower bone density (0.049 ± 1.421 vs. 0.750 ± 1.591), a higher frequency of tobacco use (12.5% vs. 6.6%), and a lower daily fruit and vegetable consumption than the non-Indiana Special Olympics athletes (74.8% vs. 84.0%). Results will be used to identify appropriate health education programs for the Indiana Special Olympics athletes.