

## **Turning Research into Classroom Practice: AKA “So What!?”**

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Turning Research into Classroom Practice: AKA “So What!?” is a bridge to disseminate research into the classroom. A research informed instructor is an up-to-date instructor! In this feature, an article from the Nutrition discipline of Family and Consumer Sciences is examined. A quick review of the article is followed by real and practical applications that can be incorporated into the classroom.

### Article citation:

Herring, T.A. & Bakhiet, R.M. (2007). Soy protein and coronary heart disease: Knowledge, attitudes, and practices of college students. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 99(2), 16-21.

### Quick review of the article:

This article reports results on a study investigating how knowledge about soy protein and its relationship to coronary heart disease (CHD) impacts college students' practices (looking at gender and ethnicity). The benefits of soy have been discussed in the literature and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) supports the claim that soy consumption may reduce the risk of CHD. As a result, a secondary purpose of the article was to look at the need for soy nutrition education for college students; the hypothesis being that young people who increase their soy consumption can reap long term benefits.

Researchers administered a survey which looked at knowledge and attitudes toward food choices and eating behaviors. The survey was non-randomly administered to students between the ages of 18-25. Students were recruited over a two day period from high traffic areas on a college campus; every fourth student who walked by was asked to participate. A total of 211 usable surveys were collected.

Results showed that 52% of students knew that CHD is the leading cause of death in America, and 95% knew that high cholesterol increases the risk of CHD. However, only 40% of students reported awareness that soy protein could lower cholesterol (thus lowering the risk of CHD). Not surprisingly, students who were more aware of the benefits of soy were more likely to consume soy products and be familiar with soy-related terminology. The top five information sources were: family (25%), print media (18%), school (11%), doctors (10%), and TV (9%). The most common sources of soy were soy sauce (53%), soy burgers (36%), tofu (34%), and soy milk (22%). However, more than 25% of students had never tried a soy product.

Some interesting significant findings related to culture and gender were reported: male students were less interested in soy than females, females had better overall nutrition knowledge than males, Asian students were more aware of soy, no African-American

students had tried miso, Asian students tended to get their information from family, while White students obtained information from family and print media, African-American students relied largely on TV and doctors for their information.

The overall nutrition knowledge portion of the survey was such that few students got all nutrition knowledge questions correct. Authors believe this is an indication that more knowledge about soy should be provided. They suggest that the government, college classrooms, and FCS professionals should champion the cause to lower CHD, specifically, using the introduction of soy protein foods.

### Practice or “So What!?”... how can I apply this in my classroom?:

Students can reap long term benefits by incorporating soy products into their diets. Furthermore, understanding CHD and other prevention strategies can also be beneficial. Activities that can accomplish these tasks can provide powerful, long-term habits for students in nutrition-related classes. Below are some activities in which students can participate and learn about soy and CHD:

- a) Have students review the Internet for soy-friendly websites, blogs and articles. What are they saying about the benefits of soy?
- b) Have students review the Internet for websites, blogs and articles that are NOT soy-friendly. What are some potential dangers of soy?
- c) Direct students to try soy products (nuts, dairy, tofu, miso, edamame, etc.). If possible, have a taste test in class with a variety of soy products. This could even be done with a comparison of non soy comparable products (e.g. soy milk vs. cow milk, soy ice cream vs. dairy-based ice cream, etc.).
- d) Have students go to a local market and review the large number of soy products that exist. Also, have them go to a health food store to see other types of products, packaging, or marketing related to soy products.
- e) Ask students to interview either a medical doctor or registered dietitian. Have them ask their feelings about soy and the related research on the topic. What recommendations do they make to their clients?
- f) Have students research the history of soy and the prevalence of soy use across different cultures. Why are some cultures higher users of soy? Are there specific benefits or dangers that seem to go along with the related consumption?
- g) Take a poll in class and see how many students know about CHD. Also ask about their knowledge of soy.

### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

[www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)  
[www.soynutrition.com](http://www.soynutrition.com)  
[www.thefactsaboutsoy.com](http://www.thefactsaboutsoy.com)

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