

Spousal Influence on General Health Behaviors in a Community Sample

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Objective: To examine if one partner's premarital health behavior was longitudinally associated with his or her partner's health behaviors. **Methods:** Newlyweds were assessed at marriage and at 3 follow-ups with respect to frequency of general health behaviors: exercise, physical examinations, and healthy and unhealthy eating. **Results:** One partner's health behavior prior to marriage was associated with the other partner's health behavior

over time. This was true for positive and negative behaviors for both men and women. **Conclusions:** Understanding how partners influence each other's health behaviors is important for health promotion and intervention efforts. Targeting the couple for health promotion activities could benefit the couple more than simply targeting individuals.

Key words: marriage, partner influence, general health

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