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Examining the Relationship between Family Routines during Adolescence and Young Adult Health Behaviors

Research has found significant associations between family routines, like the frequency of family meals, and later adolescent health behaviors. The current study adds to this literature by (a) replicating previous findings utilizing a larger national dataset of youth and (b) incorporating much longer-term outcomes (10 and 14 years). Data comes from the NLSY97. A total of 5,419 youth were surveyed at 12-14 years of age, and then annually for 14 years (84% retention at 14 years). Results indicate that more family routines during adolescence are associated with better general health during young adulthood (p 's < 0.001). Routines are also positively associated with healthy diet and behaviors in young adulthood (p 's < 0.001). This study highlights the lasting impact of family interactions across development. Subsequent analyses will parse out the specific predictive contribution of family meals shared, as well as the impact of family routines on substance use.