

KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF FISH CONSUMPTION ADVISORIES AMONG SPORT FISHERMAN IN A SOUTHEASTERN COASTAL COMMUNITY

Principle Presenter: Ivar Frithsen, MD
Co-Presenter: Johnny Weeks, MD
Trident/MUSC Family Medicine Residency Program

Introduction

In the spring of 2004 a federal advisory warned specific at-risk populations to restrict consumption of certain saltwater fish species due to high levels of mercury. No known attempt has been made to determine public awareness concerning this advisory or if it has affected fish consumption patterns.

Methods

Sport fishermen were the focus of this population survey concerning knowledge of and attitude toward fish consumption advisories. A survey was developed and pilot tested. Also included in the survey, were questions to determine fish consumption practices of the fisherman and other household members.

Results

Ten surveys have been completed. 100% of those surveyed were men, but data was obtained about women and children based on questions directed toward other household members. Results show some general awareness of fish consumption advisories with little specific knowledge. However, most subjects (and their families) do not eat significant amounts of the restricted fish.

Discussion

The results of this survey could be used to determine the need for further public education concerning fish consumption practices. Additional studies could be aimed at determining the fish consumption patterns of other populations to determine who would most benefit from further education.