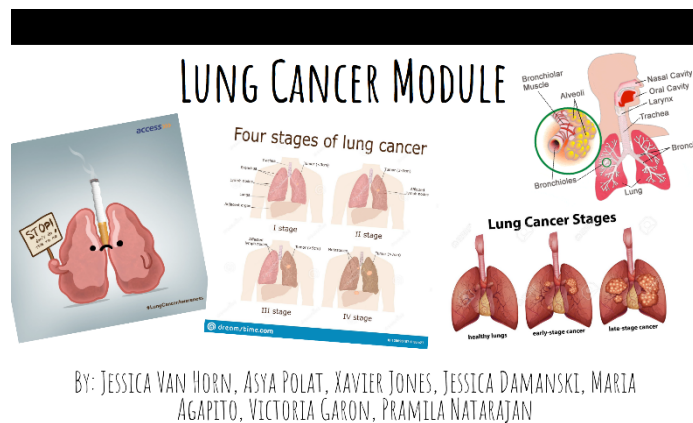


Creating Modules for Public Health Cancer Education for Middle School Students
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Throughout my experience at the Rutgers Youth Enjoy Science (RUYES) program during summer of 2021, I was blown away by its focus on community outreach. It prioritizes bridging the gap between research and public knowledge in order to benefit our communities. I was able to learn about the ways that research could be utilized, not just for public service, but also to connect to the community around us and help everyone seek better health. As part of my work at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, I was able to fully get involved in community outreach operations. One of the ways that I did that was through the Rutgers Science Explorer Bus program. During the summer, RUYES participants worked together to create educational modules for the Bus. The overall RUYES group was divided into two groups. I chose to join the group creating activities relating to skin cancer.

My group and I brainstormed ways to fully engage middle school students. Cancer is a very emotionally difficult topic, and we wanted to make sure that we communicated the nuances of skin cancer in a way that

wouldn't be scary to them. We came up with projects that discussed ways they could decrease their risk while also communicating the multiple types of skin cancer that exist. I decided to focus on ways that people could prevent skin cancer over their entire lives.



With the pandemic being a constant variable in the future, I wanted to make a project that was sure to be adaptable to an online version. Therefore, I created a “choose your own adventure” game for students to play either in-person or using online polling apps. It emphasized the importance of wearing sunscreen, hats, and other protective measures

and was designed to help students understand what skin cancer is and how our habits can really increase our risk of skin cancer throughout our lives.

A great part of the Rutgers Science Explorer Bus is that they can help communicate public health initiatives to the state's youth by making sure that they can learn about ways to live healthier and happier. Currently, I'm working to have the Bus visit my school district. I'm excited to help educate my community on skin cancer specifically. Many don't realize that their everyday life choices can greatly impact their health. While many people might not do something as drastic as subjecting themselves to radiation or cigarette smoke, small choices like wearing a hat or sunscreen can help make the difference for their health in the future. Helping them understand that is the first step.

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