RECRUITMENT APPROACH AND BASELINE CHARACTERISTICS IN A PROSPECTIVE STUDY OF YOUNG GIRLS: THE CYGNET STUDY.

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Background: There is growing interest in the role of early life exposures in the development of adult chronic diseases such as breast cancer. The Cohort Study of Young Girls' Nutrition, Environment and Transitions (CYGNET Study), a part of the Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center, is examining environmental, lifestyle, and genetic predictors of early puberty. Girls were eligible for recruitment if they were born into and are current members of Kaiser Permanente Northern California (KPNC), lived in selected Bay Area communities, and did not have a health condition known to influence age at onset of puberty.
Methods: As girls were KPNC members at birth, it was possible to identify a recruitment pool of age-eligible girls through linkage of a database containing all KPNC births since 1993 with current membership files. A total of 2,245 potentially eligible girls were identified. Pediatricians of potentially eligible girls were notified about possible enrollment of the girl into the CYGNET Study. If there was no objection, parents were mailed a recruitment letter with reply postal card, and three weeks later, a telephone call was placed to determine interest in the study. If interested, a baseline clinic visit was scheduled.
Results: Recruitment began in June 2005, and baseline exams were conducted through August 2006, establishing a cohort of 444 girls. The average age at baseline clinic visit was 7.4 years (range 6.5 to 8.1 years). Among the girls, 249 (56.1%) are white, 76 (17.2%) are African American, 28 (6.3%) are Asian, 2 are American Indian, 48 (10.8%) report more than one race, and 41 (9.2%) report race as "other". Most of the latter two groups are Latina, of whom 115 (25.9%) are enrolled. The proportion of girls with BMI $\geq 85^{th}$ percentile for age-specific norms according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was 29.3 percent. Thirty-three (7.5%) girls were at Tanner Stage 2 or greater for breast development (B2), 39 (9.2%) were at Tanner Stage 2 or greater for pubic hair development (PH2), and 64 (15.0%) were at B2 or PH2 or higher. Analyses suggest higher prevalence of puberty onset among African American and Latina girls, and a strong association of BMI and Tanner Stage at baseline.
Conclusions: The CYGNET Study and companion studies in Cincinnati and New York should provide an important resource for understanding predictors of early puberty.

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