

11/16/05 Developed by Chuck Christian and Dan Volz

FISH CONSUMPTION STUDY FOCUS GROUP GUIDELINES

The University of Pittsburgh, Graduate School of Public Health, Center for Healthy Environments and Communities has asked people who fish in the Three Rivers Area to participate in focus groups in order to gather information on the type and amount of fish caught and eaten in the Three Rivers Basin. The purpose of this study is to better understand the risks and benefits of eating these fish.

This is a descriptive qualitative study. Before entering the study:

- Perspective participants are informed that any information given and recorded will be kept confidential
- Perspective participants will be informed if they wish of the results of both the focus group study as well as contaminant levels in the Three Rivers Area fish.
- Perspective participants have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and no identifying information will be kept by Dr. Volz and the researchers working on the study without the expressed written permission of the participant.

When participants agree to enter the study they are being asked to:

- Share their contact information so that they may be contacted about the time and location of the focus groups.
- Participate in three 1 hour sessions with a recorder who will type a verbatim record of the session in real time as well as recording each session on a tape recorder.
- Be on time for each session and remain for the entire session
- The focus group sessions will discuss the fishing methods of the participants, the amount and type of fish caught and whether or not the fish is taken home and eaten as well as cooking methods.
- Participants who attend all three sessions will be given a new rod and reel after the last session.

LIMITATIONS

Fishers under 21 years of age will not be able to participate in the study.

Fishers who do not fish the Three Rivers Basin Area.

HOW THE FOCUS GROUPS WILL BE CONDUCTED

1. Each focus group will gather in a comfortable private room with adequate space for each participant along with facilitator and group recorder.
2. Participants will register for the focus group by signing the group sign in form and reading and signing the informed consent form.
3. The focus group will begin only when ALL participants have gathered.
4. The facilitator will introduce the focus group and himself as well as the recorder.

5. He will instruct participants the session will be one hour in length and will be tape recorded but this tape will be kept under lock and key and will not be shared with anyone outside of the study along with the notes from the session.

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6. The facilitator will instruct participants that he will be asking a number of questions but that these questions are guidelines and participants are free to talk about whatever is important to them, especially concerning their reasons for participating in this study.
7. Participants will be reminded that they are here voluntarily and have agreed to fully participate in each session yet they may leave the session and the study at any time.
8. Participants are also free to NOT speak if they so desire.
9. Participants are instructed to be comfortable and if they need to take care of themselves during the session to feel free to get up and move around.
10. Participants are asked to respect each other and the integrity of the session. This means only one person should speak at a time and that each person has a right to their opinions and beliefs.
11. It is important to instruct participants that in each session all the questions may not be addressed. It is important that participants understand relevant information pertaining to their insights and perspectives is what is of primary importance.
12. The facilitator will notify participants when the time for the focus group is almost finished. Each participant will be asked if they have anything else to add before the session ends. Each participant will be thanked for their participation in this session.
13. At the end of the session the facilitator and recorder will process their thoughts and reactions to the group. These will be recorded on tape.
14. All materials will be returned to the Research Assistant and PI for the study for review and analysis.
15. When all three sessions have concluded the participants will be thanked for their participation and input. Those participants who have attended all three sessions will be given a voucher for a new fishing rod and reel. For each participant who receives a voucher they will sign a form indicating they received payment.
16. Those participants who have indicated a desire to be informed about the study will be reminded that their contact information will be retained for this purpose. Those who are exiting the study will have their contact information destroyed.