NP30 COPASCities: Building Capacity for Food Systems Change for Childhood Obesity Prevention in South Carolina Communities

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Objective: Community organizing is a common approach to changing a variety of community systems. The steps in community organizing include issue identification, building a base of people affected by the issue and willing to work for change, taking action, developing leaders, and evaluation of newly emerging issues. In COPASCities, year 4 we catalyzed and ethnographically observed community organizing in 4 partner communities (C1-C4).

Description: Organizing campaigns included base building through a local food guide, house meetings, and a local food pledge drive (C1); taking action to improve access to healthy foods through a produce buying cooperative that offers the SNAP Healthy Bucks incentives (C2); developing leadership through recruiting family champions for child nutrition programs (C3) and capacity building programs, including 55 leaders completing the food systems change certificate program; and evaluation of newly emerging issues with the development of a second campaign to make safer routes to school in a community where a child died waiting at a school bus stop (C4).

Evaluation: Community organizing efforts increased the reach and sustainability of food systems change for obesity prevention by increasing community engagement in identifying relevant local issues, working for change, and building capacity for success. Organizing challenged existing power structures, and daily experiences of racism and classism shaped community leaders' perceptions of powerlessness. Decision case studies were developed to build the capacity of leaders to identify and navigate these challenges. Policy and practice briefs are available.

Conclusions and Implications: Creating systems change required leadership, development of a common vision, communication among partners, and shifting power.

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NP31 Niños Sanos, Familia Sana: A Multi-Component Intervention to Prevent Obesity in Mexican-Heritage Children in Rural California

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Objective: To fill a gap in knowledge related to effective interventions in Mexican-heritage populations, this study had four aims: slow down the rate of weight gain among

intervention children compared to controls; identify mediating factors related to economic and nutrition education intervention components; develop a culturally-adapted nutrition and physical activity curriculum for families; and increase cultural competency of university students.

Description: In 2012, the Niños Sanos, Familia Sana study began a three-year community-based intervention that provided a monthly voucher to buy fruits and vegetables; an enhanced, school-based, physical activity program; and nutrition and physical activity education targeting Mexican-heritage families with children ages 3-8 years. A comparison community received family educational programs (not nutrition-related).

Evaluation: Follow-up anthropometric measures were analyzed for 387 intervention and 313 comparison children. After three years, obese boys and girls had a significantly lower rate of body mass index gain in the intervention group compared to controls (interaction obesity status by treatment, $p=0.05$). Household purchases included a wide variety of produce, with bananas, apples, tomatoes, avocados, mangoes, strawberries, pineapples, cucumbers, limes, and oranges being most frequently selected ($n=227$). Frequency of consuming energy-dense foods decreased significantly in the intervention children over three years compared to controls ($n=175$, $p=0.008$).

Conclusions and Implications: This study will yield insights to guide government nutrition and food assistance programs in promoting behavioral change and preventing obesity in similar high-risk populations.

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NP32 A Data Summary of a Community-Based Participatory Research Project Targeted Toward the Prevention of Adolescent Obesity

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Objective: To develop a community-based program that targets overweight and obesity prevention among adolescents in limited resource, minority communities.

Description: Summary of analyzed data of a five year, tri-state, quasi-experimental project including six communities (one control and one intervention community from each state) who are responsible for creating and implementing one nutrition and one physical activity program addressing overweight and obesity among 6-8th grade youth.

Evaluation: Mixed methods approach used in collecting community food and physical activity environmental data, student health behavior questionnaire data, intervention community focus group data and community panel transcripts.