A Social Marketing and Environmental Change Intervention: Get Fruved Years 01-02

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Abstract

Objectives: Identify components and outcome assessments of the Get Fruved project.

Description: Get Fruved is a Community Based Participatory Research project utilizing social marketing and environmental change (designed and implemented by college students in partnership with researchers and Extension professionals) to promote health and prevent unwanted weight gain among older adolescents entering college. Frueid student organizations/groups on four intervention campuses developed and implemented a 24-week intervention, began to function as a coordinating center for campus health promotion activities, matched health peer mentors with first year students, and advocated for environmental and policy change. Four additional university campuses served as control sites.

Evaluation: Physical assessments and surveys were completed with 493 intense intervention intervention participants (students who developed and implemented the intervention), 85 control intensive intervention participants, and 1,148 diffuse intervention and control participants (first year college students). Survey only information was collected from an additional 4,595 first year students. The primary outcome is weight change in the first year of college; additional outcomes include a wide range of health-related behavior.

Conclusions and Implications: Baseline assessments are being analyzed and one year post assessments were completed in May, 2016. In the next two years of the project, the peer-led intervention will continue to be tested on the college campuses and college students will work with high school students to develop, implement, and evaluate the intervention on high school campuses. In the final years of the project, the intervention will be disseminated to additional college and high school campuses.

Overall Project Design

The study is a control-treatment, pre-test, post-test trial using a nested cohort design:

- Four conditions (intense intervention, moderate intervention, control, and cohort)
- Four control universities and four intervention universities

Year 01 Activities

Weekly activities:
- Social media delivered health messages (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram etc.)
- Education activities (cooking demonstrations, taste testing, physical activity classes, etc.)
- Social marketing of health messages (posters, flyers, etc.)
- Cultivating events (dances, group meditation, races, cook-offs, etc.)

Wellness Report Cards

Weekly report cards were developed based on responses to survey items and were electronically provided to participants at intervention schools at multiple time points throughout the year. The wellness report cards contained information on the participant’s sleep, fruit and vegetable intake, physical activity levels, and stress management behavior with comparisons to national recommendations and campus averages.

Town Hall Meetings

Town hall meetings were held that brought student researchers, SMEI, peer mentors, student organization representatives, and other interested students together to discuss thoughts, priorities, and potential strategies to improve health environments, policies, and behavior on college campuses.

Student Organizations

A national 4-H Fruved student organization and campus chapter organizational structure was conceived and development began.

Year 02 Activities

Peer Mentoring

Incoming freshmen participants (N=534) took a peer matching survey in Fall 2015 and were matched to trained peer mentors (N=181). Mentees worked with their mentors throughout the school year to help the freshmen have a successful and healthy first year at college.

Intervention Implementation

The 24-week intervention was implemented on four intervention campuses by students working in partnership with researchers and Extension professionals. The weekly topics represented areas within the three main elements (diet, physical activity, and stress) that the 4-H students identified as being needed to promote overall wellness and weight management among older adolescents.

Year 02 Assessments

Incoming freshmen (n=5,743) at eight universities (four intervention and four control) took a screener during summer and early fall 2015 to determine if they were considered at increased risk of gaining weight in their first year of college (less than 45% optimal fruit/vegetable intakes and met at least one additional criteria). Of the 2,885 freshmen determined to be “at risk,” 1,153 freshmen completed full assessments in the fall and 864 completed the follow-up full assessments in the spring.

SMEI, student researchers, peer mentors and members of the intense control group (n=244; 37 intense control group) also completed the full assessments in the fall and 224 (81 intense control group) completed the full assessments in the spring.

Of the first year students that completed the screening process but were not fully assessed in fall 2015, 895 completed a short survey (reporting height, weight, and fruit/vegetable intake) again in spring 2016.

Data on frequency and quality of contact with freshmen mentees were collected monthly from Peer Mentors.

To examine the impact of the intervention on different aspects of student life, six Ripple Mapping Focus Groups were completed at the end of the spring 2016 semester (three with freshmen and three with student researchers/peer mentors; n=18 and n= 12, respectively).

Next Steps

Post assessment data are being analyzed.

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