Mapping Food and Nutrition Education Resources and Professional Development Opportunities for Teachers in the Pacific Islands

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Background: Schools provide a unique opportunity to educate and motivate Pacific Island students and the wider Pacific Island community about food systems, food production activities (eg, gardening and cooking) and to focus on the knowledge and skills needed to make healthy and sustainable food choices. However, it has been reported that school educators can find it challenging to translate food and nutrition curriculum to lesson plans and learning activities and source contextually-relevant resources.

Objective: This project aimed to identify food and nutrition curriculum materials and professional development/upskilling activities available for Pacific Island educators, to inform the development of a web-based resource.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: In 2022, a systematic desk-based scoping activity was undertaken to identify any resources available to teach food and nutrition in Pacific Island schools (primary and secondary level) and professional development opportunities relevant for educators for 14 countries.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Identification, and categorisation of food and nutrition teaching resources and professional development opportunities.

Results: There are limited resources and opportunities for Pacific Island food and nutrition teachers to upskill in food and nutrition education. There are several resources that are available for specific countries, but few that are designed for use regionally. Some of these resources are directly aligned to food-based dietary guidelines, while others appear to be developed for specific activities by non-governmental organisations. Resources that could support food and nutrition education in schools was related to cooking, ocean and waterway foods, food in schools, food safety, gardening, healthy eating, pacific research, sustainability, teaching practice and WASH.

Conclusion: School educators may benefit from more food and nutrition resources and professional development activities to complement those that are currently available. Given the challenges experienced in locating and sourcing resources, all resources and professional development opportunities were collated and linked to on a web-based resource, the Pacific School Food Hub.

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Monitoring Is an Effective Parenting Practice to Encourage Adolescents to Meet the Dietary Guidelines for Americans

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Background: Monitoring parenting practice refers to the tracking of what a children eat and drink. Parents can monitor their children to ensure they consume adequate amounts of healthy food and avoid unhealthy food to meet the daily recommended minimum Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) for all food groups.

Objective: This study examines how monitoring parenting practice is related to meeting the daily recommended minimum of DGA for the consumption of all MyPlate food items by adolescents.

Study Design, Setting, and Participants: The study design was cross-sectional. An online survey by Qualtrics was used to collect the data from 211 parents with their adolescents (10-17 years old). Parents answered ten questions to identify the degree of their monitoring practice. The 2012 Youth Adolescent Food Frequency Questionnaire collected adolescent food consumption data. Spearman rank correlation coefficient, Wilcoxon rank-sum test, and stepwise logistic regression were performed.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: How parental monitoring helps adolescents to meet the daily recommended

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minimum amount of the DGA for different MyPlate food items. **Results:** The results show a positive relationship between monitoring and consuming all MyPlate items (p<0.05). In addition, parental monitoring scores were significantly higher among adolescents who met the DGA for all MyPlate items (p<0.05) except for protein consumption. Based on the regression, while all the possible effective cofactors were controlled, for every one score increase in monitoring practice, adolescents were approximately 3.8, 2.78, 2.63, and 2.19 times more likely to consume the DGA recommended daily minimum amount of fruits (p<0.001), vegetables (p<0.001), grains (p<0.001), and dairy (p=0.003), respectively. **Conclusion:** Parents can adopt monitoring as a suitable food-related parenting practice to encourage their adolescents to adopt desired eating behaviors to meet the DGA recommended daily minimum amounts. **Funding:** NIFA

**Perceived Impact of Dietary Patterns on Cancer Among Asian Indians Living in US**

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**Background:** While cancer is the second leading cause of death among Asian Indians in the US, this group has not been featured in studies investigating their knowledge and understanding of the role of dietary patterns in cancer prevention. Little is known about their cultural perceptions of the connection between food and cancer.

**Objective:** To understand the cultural perceptions of the role of dietary patterns in the development and treatment of cancer among Asian-Indian adults living in an urban Midwestern city.

**Study Design, Setting, Participants:** Qualitative semi-structured interviews were conducted with 20 Asian-Indian adults, above the age of 25 with no prior diagnosis of cancer.

**Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Individual interviews were recorded on Zoom® and verbatim transcripts were cross-checked for consistency. Content analysis was performed by 2 interviewers to identify themes using a Grounded Theory approach.

**Results:** Many were unaware of cancer as a leading cause of death in the Asian-Indian community. Participants had mixed perceptions about the role of traditional Indian food in cancer development; some believed it was preventative, and others saw it as a risk factor. Several believed that cancer was a result of carbohydrate-related complications. Some participants believed that regular alcohol consumption could reduce cancer risk.

**Conclusion:** There is a gap in awareness of the role of how dietary patterns and nutrition recommendations influence cancer prevention. While further research is needed at a wider, nationwide level to substantiate these findings, efforts are needed for disseminating culturally-tailored information about the role of dietary patterns as a modifiable risk factor in cancer prevention.

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**Preschool Nutrition Education Series Improves Likelihood that Children Will Try a Food Sample**

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**Objective:** The objective was to evaluate the implementation of University of the District of Columbia (UDC) SNAP-Ed preschool nutrition education series using outcomes evaluation techniques.

**Use of Theory or Research:** Children, ages two to five, are more likely to exhibit picky eating behaviors or food neophobia (D. V. Diamantis, et al., 2023). Repeated exposure can increase a child’s acceptance of a new or unfavorable food (Caton, et al., 2014). School-based interventions can be the most effective way to change the nutritional knowledge and behavior of children (Boocock, 1995).

**Target Audience:** Children living in Washington, DC, aged three to five, participating in SNAP-Ed in early childhood education from October 2021 to June 2022.

**Program Description:** UDC SNAP-Ed implemented a nutrition education series in 11 public schools, reaching 638 preschoolers. The series consisted of nine monthly 30-minute lessons featuring MyPlate, handwashing, and physical activity. Each lesson culminated with a food sample. During the tasting, educators established norms with students and teachers. Norms included encourage trying, not liking; don’t yuck my yum; and everyone will be served.

**Evaluation Methods:** Evaluation was implemented in the form of an observational taste test. The nutrition educator recorded results for each child based on if he/she ate all, a portion, or none of the sample.

**Results:** The taste test tool revealed that of all tastings, 84% tried the sample with a monthly average of 51.2% eating the whole sample. Samples featuring fruits (3 of the 9 monthly samples) had a higher preference with an average of 70.6% finishing the sample compared to 31.9% finishing the vegetables samples (3 of the 9).

**Conclusion:** Implementation of an observational taste test can be an appropriate evaluation tool for preschoolers who may not be able to self-report. Series-based nutrition education can increase the likelihood that preschoolers will try a food sample. Higher emphasis on vegetables-related lessons and food samples may be necessary to increase preschool-aged vegetable consumption.

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