Impact and Acceptability of the Fresh Start Produce Rx Program on Food Literacy, Nutrition and Health

Brandon Stroud, BS, CHES, East Carolina University; Lauren Sastre, PhD, LDN, RDN, sastrel18@ecu.edu

Objective: The purpose of the pilot Fresh Start PRx (FSPRx) Program was to impact healthy food access and food literacy with rural, uninsured patients with diabetes.

Use of Theory or Research: The FSPRx Program was grounded in the socioecological model. Prior PRx research with a similar population included educational handouts and recipes and significantly impacted diet quality and glycemic control; however, lacked impact on food literacy, therefore, PRx programming with more direct nutrition education support was warranted.

Target Audience: Uninsured patients diagnosed with type-2 diabetes in rural, Eastern North Carolina.

Program Description: The pilot 20-week FSPRx Program included the provision of fresh produce directly provided (3-5 lbs/class) to participants during nine group classes. The PRx focused on non-starchy vegetables and aligned with class cooking demonstrations, recipes, and taste testing per class. Group classes focused on improving food literacy and a healthy lifestyle and included activities/handouts developed and tailored for an under-sourced, lower-literacy audience. Additional behavioral support to set nutrition and physical activity goals were provided via individualized telephone-based health coaching.

Evaluation Methods: A validated food literacy questionnaire were collected pre/post program and a final program evaluation survey developed specifically to evaluate the FSPRx Program were conducted post-program. Data analysis included descriptive statistics and paired sample t-tests via IBM SPSS 28.0.

Results: Total food literacy scores increased by an average of 12.8 points which was statistically significant (p= 0.04, t= -2.16). Most participants reported being very satisfied (83.3%) or satisfied (12.5%) and that program helped them to better follow their medical providers nutrition recommendations (92.3%), improved diet quality (88.5%), increased access to fresh produce (84.6%), and willingness to try new/unfamiliar produce (80.8%). Participants used most (39.1%) or all (42.6%) of the produce provided and recipes (68%).

Conclusion: This project is an example of how multi-level SNAP-Ed programming (direct nutrition education and PSE garden intervention) can promote healthy eating and physical activity habits among older adults.

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Impact of a Nutrition Education and Physical Activity Intervention on Fruits and Vegetable Intake of Nigerian Immigrants

Oluwatosin Akingbule, CHES, MS, oao3@illinois.edu, Department of Kinesiology and Community Health, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Margarita Teran-Garcia, PhD, MD, University of Illinois Extension, College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES), University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Stephanie Okoye, Pharm D, Division of Nutritional Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Oluferin Fabusoro, RD, Division of Nutritional Sciences, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign; Reginald Alston, PhD, Department of Kinesiology and Community Health, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Background: As African immigrants stay longer in the U.S, they experience dietary acculturation, characterized by increased consumption of processed and fast food, and reduced consumption of fruits and vegetables.

Objective: Evaluate the impact of “Pathway to Health” program on the fruit and vegetable intake (FVI) of Nigerian immigrants using the Veggie Meter (VM).

Study Design, Settings, Participants: Recent Nigerian immigrant families, with children aged 6-12 years and living in Illinois, participated in “Pathway to Health”, a culturally tailored, family-based nutrition education and physical activity intervention adapted from the Abriendo Caminos program aimed at Hispanics. Participants engaged in a 75 minute weekly video conference call for six weeks. The adult and child nutrition education component lasted for at least 35 minutes each week covering topics such as portion sizes, water, fruits and vegetables, grains and legumes, sugar and salt, and fats and protein.

Measurable Outcome/Analysis: Skin carotenoid levels (a biomarker for FVI) of parents and children were measured with a VM (Longevity Link Corporation, Salt Lake City, UT, USA) at baseline, one-week post-intervention, and at a two-month follow-up. Paired t-tests compared changes in the VM scores from baseline to post-intervention and from baseline to two-month post-intervention. Parents also participated in individual interviews to provide their perception of the program’s impact at one-week post-intervention.

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