From JNEB

So What Are the Implications?

One of my favorite parts of articles, briefs, and Great Educational Materials (GEMs) in JNEB is the Implications for Research and Practice section. This is where the rubber meets the road, the theory is put into practice, and the next steps are taken. Often in research, we don’t get to see the practical application of the rigorous research we’ve done. What’s great about our field is that the work we do has immediate practical applications, which is one of the key features that distinguishes JNEB from other journals. Our goal in nutrition education is to promote healthier behaviors among individuals and communities and JNEB recognizes the importance of this outcome and highlights the implications of research on behavior change. This issue is filled with great examples of how nutrition educators and researchers can operationalize their research findings.

The work by Beck et al. focuses on the development of a tool to assess sugar-sweetened beverage consumption among young children. Their work is distinct because it addresses the unique cultural behaviors of Latinos, an understudied group that faces disproportionate rates of diet-related chronic diseases. Their findings have immediate and important implications for practitioners working with the Latino population to improve health outcomes. This tool provides a way to quickly assess the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages that have been shown to be associated with less healthy behaviors. The utility of this tool for gathering quick data to develop interventions among Latino youth is valuable.

Likewise, Vaudin et al. examine how older adults learn about and utilize food assistance resources to address their own barriers to food access. As the older adult population continues to increase in the United States along with rates of food insecurity, the need for improved access to food resources is greater now than ever. This work not only addresses the importance of improved access to food but it highlights the other, less obvious benefits of food assistance programs for this group, such as social engagement and improved medical networks, both of which are important for healthy lifestyles. The findings of this work have direct implications for practitioners to screen older adults for food insecurity, to take into consideration the benefits of programs that encourage socialization, and to be cognizant of the importance of making food assistance programs visible and accessible.

I don’t want to spoil the rest of the issue by telling you about all of the great articles in my editorial, but I will say that the research being conducted on the benefits of digital technology for improving access to nutrition information is pretty amazing. As we continue to move more toward digital approaches to reaching out to audiences, the implications of this work are far-reaching and critical. By bridging the gap between theory and application, JNEB equips practitioners with valuable tools and insights and enhances the collective efforts to address the challenges of nutrition education and behavior. As we continue to navigate the complexities of promoting healthy lifestyles, the emphasis on implications for research and practice remains essential.

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REFERENCES