Social Marketing Campaign at Farmers’ Markets to Encourage Fruit and Vegetable Purchases in Rural Obese Counties
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Abstract

Objective: Farmers’ markets are a food environment venue with the potential to increase fruit and vegetable consumption among rural residents of the United States. This study evaluated a social marketing campaign, Plate It Up Kentucky Proud, to determine the association between exposure to PIUKP and fruit and vegetable purchasing habits.

Methods

Chi-Square Analysis of Change in Shopping Behaviors Related to Plate It Up Kentucky Proud Social Marketing Campaign

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<th>Variable</th>
<th>P-value</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does having recipe cards available at the market influence your buying of fruits and vegetables while at the market?</td>
<td>p&lt;0.001</td>
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Did the recipe sample available contribute to your buying the ingredients for the recipe sampled? | p<0.001 |

In the past several weeks, did you hear about the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud program? | p<0.001 |

If you took a food sample from the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud program, did that sample make you want to prepare the food item at home? | p<0.001 |

Discussion and Conclusions

The results of this study indicate that shopping behaviors may have been influenced by the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud social marketing campaign. Exposure to the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud social marketing campaign via recipe cards and sampling were both significantly associated with influencing the purchase of fruits and vegetables at the farmers’ market. Previous findings utilizing the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud campaign had similar results. Two weeks following the recipe sampling experience, 36% of those surveyed had prepared the recipe at home (Stephenson et al. 2013). These results lend support as evidence for the current study, as 74% of participants were willing to prepare the recipe at home following sampling. This suggests patrons’ likelihood of purchasing fruits and vegetables from the farmers’ market and preparing the recipe at home may have increased following survey participation. This may also increase exposure to and intake of fresh fruits and vegetables among rural residents.

This study assessed the influence of the Plate It Up Kentucky Proud program on fruit and vegetable purchasing habits at farmers’ markets in rural Kentucky counties with obesity rates greater than 40%. Dietary changes, like increased consumption of fruits and vegetables, can aid in the prevention and management of chronic disease conditions, and may also lead to improved dietary patterns among community residents. This study provides evidence for the importance of utilizing social marketing campaigns at farmers’ markets in rural communities as a way to promote greater fruit and vegetable purchases and consumption, and most importantly, overall health.

Results

A total of 112 participants completed the survey in year one and 139 participants completed the survey in year two.

In year one, the mean age of participants was 49 years. Most participants were white (97%), female (56%), married or living with a partner (61%), had a high school degree or its equivalent (97%), had household income of less than $40,000 (60%), and lived in a rural area (71%). In year two, the mean age of participants was 48 years. Most participants were white (98%), female (56%), married or living with a partner (66%), had a high school degree or its equivalent (97%), had household income of less than $40,000 (61%), and lived in a rural area (75%).

Chi-square tests were used to examine associations between exposure to a social marketing campaign and fruit and vegetable shopping behaviors.

Background

Greater intakes of fruits and vegetables have been associated with lower risks of several chronic diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and cancer (Ford et al. 2002, Hartley et al. 2012, Tarutai et al. 2015). These diseases can be managed with dietary changes; however, consumption of these foods remains low among adults in the United States (Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2015-2020). One approach to improve intakes is through a social marketing strategy and improvement in access to healthy foods.

To encourage the purchase of fruits and vegetables, marketing strategies, specifically social marketing interventions, have successfully been used in several settings with many populations to achieve a variety of healthy eating goals, which can aid in the prevention and management of many chronic disease conditions, including obesity. This is an important strategy to consider, especially for residents of rural communities in the United States.

Research Question

How does a fruit and vegetable social marketing campaign influence rural farmers’ market patrons’ purchasing decisions?

Funding Source

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Sources


