BACKGROUND

Obesity related chronic diseases are currently the major conditions affecting the health of Jamaican adults. More than half of adult women and more than a quarter of the male population are obese. Adherence to dietary guidelines can reduce risk of chronic disease. Stage of change (SOC) tailored interventions based on the Transtheoretical model (TTM) of behaviour change theory are beneficial for improving adherence to dietary guidelines.

OBJECTIVES

To compare the Transtheoretical Model (TTM) stages of change (SOC) for fruit and vegetable consumption among adults and evaluate the dominant factors influencing each SOC.

METHOD

STUDY DESIGN, SETTING, PARTICIPANTS: We conducted a household-based cross-sectional survey among 1,057 adults aged 18 - 99 years, selected from five parishes in Jamaica. Data was collected using an interviewer-administered questionnaire over a five month period to determine their stages of readiness for fruit and vegetable (F&V) consumption.

OUTCOME MEASURES AND ANALYSIS: Socio-demographic, anthropometric (height and weight), fruit and vegetable consumption SOC, self-efficacy, positive perceptions, barriers and social support data; were collected. The TTM of SOC was used to determine respondents' status on the model. This was determined as:
- Persons consuming 0-4 servings of F&V and not thinking of increasing their intake in the next six months - precontemplation;
- Those consuming 0-4 servings of F&V but thinking of increasing this number of servings in the next 6 months - contemplation;
- Persons consuming 5-10 servings of F&V and planning to increase their intake in the next 30 days and have a plan of action - preparation;
- Those consuming 5 or more servings of F&V daily for less than 6 months - action;
- Those consuming 5 or more servings of F&V daily for more than 6 months - maintenance.

Responses were scored from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Overweight and obesity were defined based on BMI while F & V consumption were scored then analysed using Chi-square, analysis of variance and regression.

RESULTS

F&V consumption of few respondents (20.5%) were in the action/maintenance SOC (see Table 1). Significantly more females were in contemplation/preparation ($\chi^2 = 12.98; p = 0.01$).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Stage of Change (SOC) for Fruit and Vegetable Consumption</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOC-F&amp;V</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pre contemplation</td>
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<td>Contemplation</td>
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Minimally support from family (mean score 10.59 of 21) (see Table 2) and friends (8.57 of 21) (see Table 3) as it relates to F&V consumption was reported. The mean scores were significantly higher among respondents in the preparation stage compared to the pre/contemplation stages and also among those in the action/maintenance stages compared to the pre/contemplation stages.

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Females are least likely to maintain participation in programmes designed to increase fruit and vegetable consumption as our data suggest that they are mostly in the Pre/contemplation and preparation SOC. Community-based interventions designed to involve social support from families and friends may be beneficial in increasing and maintaining F&V consumption at levels in line with recommended guidelines. Such interventions must also seek to increase awareness about the benefits of consuming F&V.

REFERENCES


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