Abstract

Background: USDA’s Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) encourages social marketing as a way to enhance nutrition education in SNAP-Ed. In 2016, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System at Auburn University (ACES) developed three new billboard messages as part of its rebranded Nutrition Education Program, Live Well Alabama.

Objective: To measure awareness of the social marketing campaign messages among selected Alabama SNAP-Ed parents.

Study Design, Settings, Participants: Altarum conducted an outcome evaluation using measures from the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework to assess reach and receptivity of social marketing campaign messages among parents of third grade Body Quest students throughout Alabama. A telephone survey was designed and data collected in April and May 2017.

Measureable Outcome/Analysis: Descriptive statistics were produced to describe the sample population and outcome variables. Confidence intervals were calculated to estimate significant differences among survey respondents at the alpha=0.05 level.

Results: A total of 433 surveys were completed. Over one-third (38%) of respondents were exposed to at least one of the campaign messages. Repeated exposure to campaign messages was evident, most notably for respondents exposed to the campaign (45%) than those who were not exposed (34%).

Objectives

Altarum employed a cross-sectional evaluation approach. Data were collected via telephone interviews. The sampling universe consisted of parents of third grade Body Quest students throughout Alabama. A total of 433 surveys were completed. Measures included short-term and medium-term indicators from the SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework.

Data Analysis

Using IBM SPSS 25 software, univariate and bivariate analyses were performed to examine outcomes. Confidence intervals were used to determine statistical significance of observed differences at the population level and by demographic characteristics and exposure status.

Results

Exposure

Over one-third (38%) survey respondents were exposed to at least one of the campaign messages. Significantly more African Americans were exposed to the campaign (45%) than Whites (34%) or Other/Multiple races (4%). The fruit and vegetable message was the most widely recalled by respondents (28%).

Figure 1. Exposure to campaign messages

Research has shown that repeated exposure to campaign messages is one of the most important factors for the success of a social marketing campaign. Repeated exposure was highest for the fruit and vegetable message; nearly half (47%) of respondents exposed to this message recalled seeing it five or more times. To a lesser extent, respondents also reported repeated exposure to the physical activity and drink water messages.

Figure 2. Number of times exposed respondents recalled seeing messages

After being exposed to campaign messages, three-quarters of respondents reported taking some type of action, including: planned healthy meals (46%), ate more fruits and vegetables (45%), and bought more fruits and vegetables (43%), among others (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Actions that respondents took after exposure

Consumption

Overall, respondents reported consuming an average of 1.5 cups of fruit and 1.7 cups of vegetables daily. However, those exposed to the campaign consumed significantly more fruits and vegetables than those who were not exposed (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Mean cups of fruits and vegetables consumed daily

Conclusions

ACES’s social marketing campaign reached over one-third of survey respondents, many of whom reported repeated exposure to campaign messages. After exposure, three-quarters of respondents took some type of action that showed either intent to practice or adopt a new healthy behavior. Furthermore, those who were exposed to the campaign consumed significantly more fruits and vegetables than those who were not exposed.