

Outcome Evaluation of Alabama Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program-Education (SNAP-Ed) Social Marketing Campaign

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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 the fruit and vegetable message where nearly half (47%) of all respondents exposed to this message recalled seeing it five or more times. Respondents exposed to the campaign messages consumed significantly more cups of fruits and vegetables per day than those who were unexposed (1.8 and 1.3 cups, respectively for fruits; 1.9 and 1.6 cups, respectively for vegetables). Respondents most frequently reported planning healthy meals (46%), eating more fruits and vegetables (45%), buying more fruits and vegetables (41%), thinking about making healthy food choices (41%), drinking more water (39%), and exercising more (34%) after exposure to campaign messages. Lack of time was reported as the primary barrier for adopting behaviors such as healthier eating and physical activity.

Conclusion:

ACES successfully launched a newly rebranded social marketing campaign in 2017 recognized by over one-third of respondents surveyed.

Overview

In 2016, ACES rebranded its Nutrition Education Program under the tagline *LiveWell Alabama*. In order to reach a larger segment of the SNAP-Ed eligible audience, three new social marketing messages were developed and incorporated into billboards, which were launched statewide in early 2017.



Objectives

Altarum was contracted to evaluate reach of the billboard campaign messages and to assess the attitudes, behaviors, and intentions related to diet and physical activity of the audience surveyed.

Methodology

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- and medium-term indicators from the *SNAP-Ed Evaluation Framework*.

Data Analysis

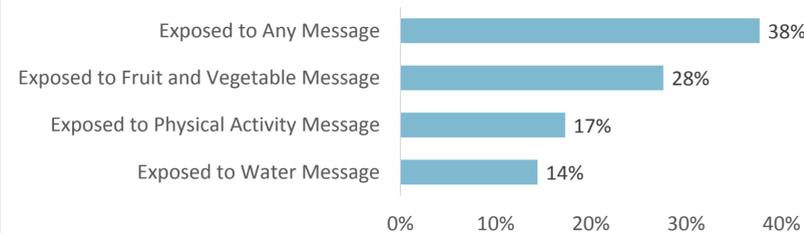
Using IBM SPSS 25 software, univariate and bivariate analyses were performed to examine outcomes. Confidence intervals were used to determine statistical significance of observed differences at the population level and by demographic characteristics and exposure status.

Results

Exposure

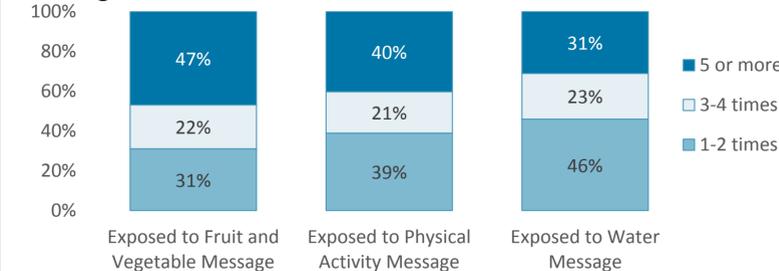
Over one-third (38%) survey respondents were exposed to at least one of the campaign messages. Significantly more African Americans were exposed to the campaign (45%) than Whites (34%) or Other/Multiple races (24%). The fruit and vegetable campaign message was the most widely recalled by respondents (28%).

Figure 1. Exposure to campaign messages



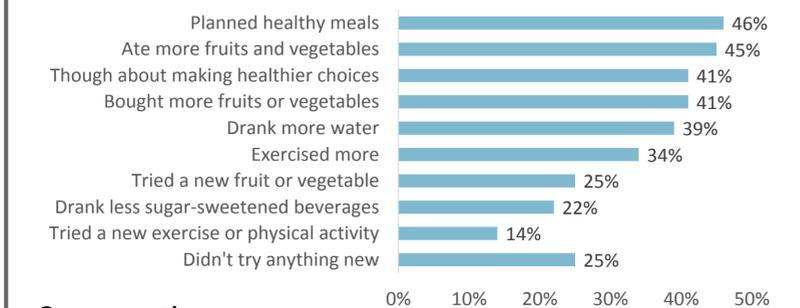
Research has shown that repeated exposure to campaign messages is one of the most important factors for the success of a social marketing campaign. Repeated exposure was highest for the fruit and vegetable message; nearly half (47%) of respondents exposed to this message recalled seeing it five or more 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 (41%), among others (Figure 3).

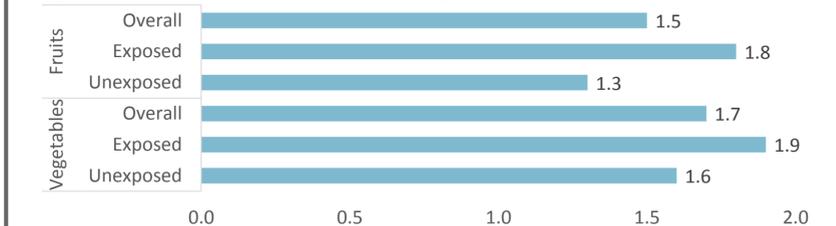
Figure 3. Actions that respondents took after exposure



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). African American respondents consumed significantly more fruits than White respondents (1.7 cups compared to 1.4 cups, respectively).

Figure 4. Mean cups of fruits and vegetables consumed daily



Respondents were asked about common barriers to both fruit and vegetable consumption. Being too busy (20% and 30%, respectively), not liking the taste (9% and 16%), and expense (17% and 11%) were the top three barriers mentioned for both fruits and vegetables.

Conclusions

ACES' 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 exposed to the campaign consumed significantly more fruits and vegetables than those who were unexposed.