Low-Income Older Adults’ Salient Beliefs Regarding Whole Grain Consumption: A Qualitative Approach

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BACKGROUND

- Given the known health benefits of whole grains (WG) in promoting overall health, as well as the low intake of WG products by low-income older adults, there is a need for developing effective health promotion programs targeting low-income older adults promoting WG consumption.

OBJECTIVE

To gain an in-depth understanding of low-income older adults’ underlying beliefs regarding WG consumption using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a framework.

METHODS

- **Study Design:** In this qualitative study, interview questions regarding WG consumption were structured according to the TPB constructs (behavioral, normative, and control beliefs).
- **Setting:** Two congregate meal sites located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.
- **Participants:** A convenience sample of 25 low-income older adults, 60 years of age and older, participated in this study.
- **Measurable Outcome/Analysis:** Individual interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and cross-checked for consistency. Content analysis was used to identify themes pertaining to the TPB constructs in addition to other prevalent themes.

RESULTS

- **Behavioral beliefs:** Participants believed WGs were nutritious and had health benefits, but disliked sensory qualities, perceived higher cost, and longer cooking time.
- **Normative beliefs:** Participants believed healthcare professionals and family would support WG consumption.
- **Control beliefs:**
  - Facilitators to WG consumption included knowledge of nutritional and health benefits, WG preparation skills, social support, availability and accessibility, and grocery shopping assistance.
  - Barriers to WG consumption included cost of WGs, age-related physical changes such as chewing and swallowing, lack of motivation to prepare WG, and nutrition-related knowledge deficits.

CONCLUSIONS

- Findings from this study provide strategies for nutrition education programs to promote increased WG consumption by low-income older adults, ultimately influencing the health status of this population.

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### Table. Sociodemographic Characteristics of Low-Income Older Adults residing in a Southern Region in the United States in an Elicitation Study Identifying Underlying Beliefs about Whole Grain Consumption (n = 25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sociodemographic Characteristics</th>
<th>n (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td>19 (76%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Racial/Ethnic Groups</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>18 (72%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6 (24%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60-64</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>4 (16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85 years or older</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Marital Status</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>9 (36%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>7 (28%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong># of Adults Living with</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>16 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong># of Children Living with</strong></td>
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<td>25 (100%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Education</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than or equal to 12th</td>
<td>16 (64%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bachelors’ degree</td>
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<td>Masters’ degree</td>
<td>1 (4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Household Income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Less than $12,000</td>
<td>16 (64%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$12,000 to less than $16,000</td>
<td>8 (32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$16,000 to less than $20,000</td>
<td>2 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SNAP participation</strong></td>
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<td>11 (44%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14 (56%)</td>
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</table>