Nutrition Education With Seniors (NEWS)—Helping Older Adults with Limited Resources Make Informed Food Choices
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Abstract
Objectives: The Nutrition Education with Seniors (NEWS) program aims to enhance Commodity and Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) participant nutrition and health knowledge, and their ability to alter their present food habits to include the CSFP foods.

Use of Theory or Research: NEWS is based on the Health Belief Model (HBM) and addresses the three HBM constructs: individual perceptions, modifying factors, and likelihood of action.

Target Audience: NEWS is for adults age 60+ years who are enrolled in the local CSFP; currently ~3,200 adults are enrolled.

Program Description: NEWS is a monthly two-page newsletter that provides (1) nutrition, usage, and storage information pertaining to the monthly featured commodity food; (2) food safety or budget-friendly tips; and (3) an easy, low-cost healthy recipe. NEWS is distributed to CSFP participants at their monthly pick-up. At pick-up, CSFP staff provide participants with a sample of the monthly recipe. Approximately 1,300 CSFP participants attend.

Evaluation Methods: Each quarter, CSFP staff distribute program evaluations to CSFP participants at the time of the food pick-up. These evaluations inquire about recipe use, application of information contained in the newsletter, and recipe demonstration participation.

Results: To date (2014 to 2019), 3,867 NEWS participants have completed an evaluation. The majority of respondents are female (62.8%), between ages 60 and 69 years, and attended at least one recipe tasting in the last three months (46.4%). The majority of respondents have used the NEWS newsletter information to make food choices (65.7%), and found the food assistance information as well as budget-friendly shopping tips useful (91.1%). Additionally, 89.4% enjoy the monthly recipe samples, with 68.6% making at least one of the NEWS recipes at home.

Conclusion: These findings suggest the NEWS program is effective in promoting informed food selection and awareness of food assistance resources, and encouraging the use of commodity foods through new recipes among older adults enrolled in the CSFP.

Background
• The dietary practices of older adults with limited resources are placing them at higher risk for poor nutritional status, risk of health problems, and functional limitations.1
• Community-based food and nutrition programs aim to improve food security and help older adults understand the role nutrition plays in maintaining and improving their health.2
• The Commodity and Supplemental Food Program (CSFP):
  o Aims to improve the health of adults age 60 years and older who are classified as low-income.
  o Provides foods to help clients supplement their diets with United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) foods.
  o Requires nutrition education to be provided.2
• To participate in the CSFP, a person must be:
  o Resident of a designated Indian Tribal Organization (n=2), state (n=46), or the District of Columbia 3
  o Requires an older adult to have a household income ≤30% of the federal poverty guidelines.
  o States may also require that participants be at nutritional risk.4

Evaluation Methods
• Quarterly program evaluations are distributed by CSFP staff to CSFP participants at the time of the food pick-up.
• The 7-question evaluations inquire about recipe use, application of information contained in the newsletter, and recipe demonstration participation.
• The evaluation responses are entered into Qualtrics by ISU

Nutrition Education With Seniors (NEWS) Program Goals
Enhance participant:
1. Knowledge of the relationship between good nutrition and good health.
2. Ability to alter present food habits to include supplemental foods along with other nutritious foods to improve their overall diet.

NEWS Program Description
• Monthly newsletter-based nutrition education program for adults age 50+ years attending the local CSFP.
• NEWS is based on the Health Belief Model.2
• Each newsletter addresses each HBM construct (individual perceptions, modifying factors, and likelihood of action) in order to increase the effectiveness of the information provided.
• Two-page newsletter, written at or below the 10th grade reading level, is comprised of information regarding:
  1. Nutrition and storage information pertaining to the monthly featured commodity food.
  2. Food safety or budget-friendly tips.
  3. An easy-to-prepare, healthy recipe (meets Iowa State University [ISU] Extension and Outreach nutritional guidelines).
• One-page instructor’s guide (provided Summer 2014-Spring 2019) used during the recipe demonstrations conducted by a CSFP Staff member that:
  1. Summarized the nutrition information discussed in the newsletter.
  2. Highlighted the health aspects of the recipe, and
  3. Provided user-friendly tips for the participants.
• Distributed at the food distribution center, through Senior Services, and during CSFP outreach activities.

Data Analysis
• Data presented are from evaluations collected from 2014 to 2019.
• Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics, version 24.0.
• All statistical analyses for the satisfaction constructs were conducted excluding those with missing data.
• Descriptive statistics were used to assess the response frequency for each question.

Results
• 3,867 evaluations were completed between Summer 2014 and Winter 2019.
• The majority of respondents were females (62.8%) between ages 60 and 69 years (52.9%), and attended at least one recipe tasting in the last three months prior to the evaluation (45.4%) (Table 1).

Limitations
• The generalizability of these findings is limited due to:
  o Lack of diversity in the sample population.
  o Self-reported outcomes.
  o Use of non-validated research tools.

Conclusions
• These findings suggest the NEWS program:
  o Is effective in promoting informed food selection and awareness of food assistance resources.
  o Encourages the use of commodity foods through new recipes among adults ages 50 years and older enrolled in the CSFP.

References