Formative Evaluation of a Culturally Adapted Spanish Nutrition Education and Obesity Prevention Curriculum for Low-Income Adults

Ariathni Pinacas Powell, MS, RD, LD; Briquette Adair Herron, PhD; Edda Cotto-Rivera, MPH, CHES; Laurel Sanville, MSD, RDN, LD; Ana Soiler, BSW, MPH; Jung Sun Lee, PhD, RDN

Department of Foods and Nutrition, University of Georgia, Athens, GA; SeSo, Inc., Snellville, GA

Objective: To conduct an exploratory formative evaluation of a culturally adapted nutrition education program for SNAP-eligible Hispanic/Latino adult Georgians.

Method:
- **Exploratory Formative Evaluation Using Mixed Methods**: Study protocol approved by the University of Georgia IRB.
- **Study Sample**: Key informant interviews with program developers and providers (n=6), program participant focus groups (n=3), and in-class observations (n=11) in one pilot county in 2019.
- **RESULTS**: Focus group and key informant interview findings suggested acceptable cultural and programmatic completeness of HPSS. Major themes from implementation and implementation phases emphasized the importance of attending to: 1) diversity and cultural appropriateness for target audiences and 2) language, translation, and other intercultural facilitators such as cultural competence and humility. A team-based approach was recommended to address cultural diversity, recruitment barriers, ongoing staff training needs, and other population-specific barriers mismatching language, home language, and administrative data and class observation data suggested high fidelity but the importance of fully bilingual paraprofessionals and ongoing training for physical activity.

Conclusions and Implications: This study found that the culturally adapted nutrition education and obesity prevention programming targeted to low-income Hispanic/Latinx and strategies can strengthen ongoing development and implementation efforts were feasible.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Hispanic/Latinx low-income population faces a high burden of health disparities including obesity; increased levels of education; limited access to health care and lower participation in community-based health promotion programs (Prael et al., 2014). Nalco-Nebraska conducted an evaluation of nutrition education programs for SNAP-eligible Hispanic/Latino adult Georgians.

- **Participants**: welcoming environment, culturally appropriate content and recipes, family focus groups (n=10)
- **Focus Group**: Self-administered online survey through Qualtrics
- **Results**: 3 (50.0%) participants responded:
  - Providers: training, new recipes, enjoyable to teach and increased reach
  - Recruiters: welcoming environment, culturally appropriate content and recipes, family focus groups (n=10)
- **Participant Focus Group** (June 2019)
  - Includes: program content, challenges, cultural competence
  - Conducted in Spanish by trained moderator
  - Standard Qualitative Data set (n=6)

**METHODS**

**STUDY OBJECTIVE**

To better understand cultural appropriateness and cultural competence from the perspectives of eligible participants and key stakeholders while identifying potential issues and guide program improvement before statewide roll-out

**RESULTS**

- **Participants**: welcoming environment, culturally appropriate content and recipes, family focus groups (n=10)
- **Focus Group**: Self-administered online survey through Qualtrics
- **Results**: 3 (50.0%) participants responded:
  - Providers: training, new recipes, enjoyable to teach and increased reach
  - Recruiters: welcoming environment, culturally appropriate content and recipes, family focus groups (n=10)

**METHODS**

**STUDY OBJECTIVE**

1. **To better understand cultural appropriateness and cultural competence from the perspectives of eligible participants and key stakeholders while identifying potential issues and guide program improvement before statewide roll-out**
2. **Characteristics of Study Participants**
   - **Gender**
     - Female: 6 (35.0%)
     - Male: 3 (18.7%)
   - **Ethnicity/Race**
     - Hispanic: 3 (50.0%)
   - **Education**
     - High School: 2 (33.3%)
   - **Language(s) Spoken at Home**
     - Only English: 3 (50.0%)
     - Only Spanish: 2 (33.3%)
   - **Typical Foods at Home**
     - Most Hispanic: 2 (33.3%)
     - Most American: 1 (16.7%)

**METHODS**

- **STUDY OBJECTIVE**
  - To better understand cultural appropriateness and cultural competence from the perspectives of eligible participants and key stakeholders while identifying potential issues and guide program improvement before statewide roll-out
  - **Characteristics of Study Participants**
    - **Gender**
      - Female: 6 (35.0%)
      - Male: 3 (18.7%)
    - **Ethnicity/Race**
      - Hispanic: 3 (50.0%)
    - **Education**
      - High School: 2 (33.3%)
    - **Language(s) Spoken at Home**
      - Only English: 3 (50.0%)
      - Only Spanish: 2 (33.3%)
    - **Typical Foods at Home**
      - Most Hispanic: 2 (33.3%)
      - Most American: 1 (16.7%)

**RESULTS**

1. **Overview of Findings**
   - **Overall Findings**
     - Providers: training, new recipes, enjoyable to teach and increased reach
   - **Recruiters**: welcoming environment, culturally appropriate content and recipes, family focus groups (n=10)
     - **Key Themes**
       - **Major Theme 1: Diversity & Cultural Appropriateness for Target Audience**
         - Language, food and culture differ among countries
       - **Major Theme 2: Language, Translation & Other Skewers**
         - Focus Group: Self-administered online survey through Qualtrics
       - **Participant Focus Group**: Self-administered online survey through Qualtrics
       - **Data Analysis**
         - Data triangulation using program administrative data and class observation data to examine the validity of interview data

**CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS**

- Formative evaluation of culturally adapted curricula can help-gather insights and recommendations for community nutrition programs
- Policy/Research Implications:
  - Refining validated accreditation scale and developing tools to determine appropriate and language material readability for low-income Hispanic populations
  - Increased community diversity andrapidity within the nutrition and public health profession
  - Expanding public health efforts targeted to the Hispanic population

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

- Thank you to the USDA SNAP-Ed team, UGA Cooperative Extension Service Partners, and our research participants.
- Funding provided by USDA SNAP-Ed
- Questions and comments can be directed to Edda Cotto-Rivera, erivera@uga.edu

**REFERENCES**


**On Key Considerations**

The approach was unique in the sense that the community was a diverse and complex one. Our focus was to empower them to work together. We first did it with the food they know and things they know.