Smarter Lunchrooms Randomized Control Trial: Results from Year 3
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Year 3 Intervention Overview

• 11 middle schools from urban and rural districts in Western New York participated during the 2014-2015 school year.
• Fall 2014: 5 schools (2 urban, 3 rural) received the intervention, and 6 schools (3 urban, 3 rural) were control schools.
• Spring 2015: control schools became treatment schools, and treatment schools became maintenance schools.
• Maintenance schools were observed to see if they continued implementing Smarter Lunchrooms protocols, after the intervention period was completed.
• The intervention combined Smarter Lunchroom protocols targeted at increasing the convenience, visibility, and attractiveness of fruits, vegetables, and white milk.

Methods

Quarter Waste Method of Visual Estimation: measures the percent of each item that was wasted on a tray. Researchers visited the cafeterias pre- and during-intervention to record the selection and waste of students who purchased a school lunch. Researchers observed whether 0%, 25%, 50%, 75%, or 100% of each food item was left on the tray.

The pre-intervention was a period of 3 weeks, and the intervention was a period of 6 weeks. Schools switched conditions at the midpoint of the year.

Discussion

The results below are limited to schools from the Fall 2014 intervention group (n=5). To evaluate sustainability, we compared Fall 2014 pre intervention data with Spring 2015 post-intervention data.

• Fruit selection increased overall by 11% (p<0.05), mainly due to a 33% (p<0.001) increase in urban schools.
• Fruit consumption decreased overall by 6% (p<0.001), primarily due to a 7% (p<0.001) decrease in rural schools.
• Vegetable selection decreased overall by 27% (p<0.001).
• Vegetable consumption decreased by 4% (p<0.05) in all schools, mainly due to an 8% (p<0.001) in rural schools.

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For more information, visit: http://www.smarterlunchrooms.org