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What is the Value of Group Nutrition Education for Older Adults with Diabetes?

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What is the Value of Group Nutrition Education for Older Adults with Diabetes?  
Hackett, Patrick; Lagana, Elizabeth; Munie, Metasebia; Ozgur, Sinan; Provencher, Heather; Taplin, AmiLyn; Ware, Kristopher; Russell, Sarah; Kennedy, Amanda

Background

- 23.6 million people or 7.8% of the US population have diabetes
- Type 2 diabetes can cause many serious problems that affect the heart, nerves, eyes, and kidneys
- Lifestyle choices, including diet management, can be used to control or help supplement medical care used in minimizing the risk factors associated with diabetes

Objective

Teach senior citizens the benefits of healthy eating to prevent or maintain diabetes with a focus on increasing fruit and vegetable intake

Methods

Teaching Clinic
- Residents at Burlington Housing Authority were taught the benefits of healthy eating and the importance of increasing fruits and vegetables.
- Cost effective measures to increase fruit and vegetable intake
- A recipe book with nutritional information, resources, and recipes was given to residents
- Important topics covered: variety, appropriate serving sizes, strive for five servings, differences between fresh, frozen, and canned

Survey Design and Receipt Analysis
- Questions focused on eating habits, current state of health, knowledge of American Diabetes Association guidelines, healthy eating habits
- Grocery receipts were collected from three weeks pre-intervention and post-intervention
- Fruit and vegetable serving sizes were quantified from the receipts

Results

Table 1. Participant Post-Survey Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject #</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>How important are vegetables in diabetes prevention?</th>
<th>How expensive is it to prepare a meal using fruits?</th>
<th>How expensive is it to prepare a meal using vegetables?</th>
<th>How many servings of fruits and vegetables does the USDA recommend per day?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Unimportant</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Same as a meal without fruit</td>
<td>Same as a meal without vegetables</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>Very Inexpensive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Same as a meal without fruit</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Same as a meal without fruit</td>
<td>Very Inexpensive</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>Same as a meal without fruit</td>
<td>Same as a meal without vegetables</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Total Number of Serving Sizes Purchased

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Pre Intervention</th>
<th>Post Intervention</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

- Participants were highly engaged in the presentation and the small group size provided an intimate learning experience.
- Limitations of this study include small sample size, selection bias, data collection difficulties, limited study time, and low ceiling of our primary outcome measure.
- A small sample size prevented more sophisticated statistical analyses.
- Survey results indicated that senior citizens realized the importance of a diet high in fruits and vegetables.
- Despite the limitations of our project, a focused nutrition intervention for diabetes prevention holds promise for improving the health behaviors of at-risk populations.

Lessons Learned

- Grocery store receipts provide limited information, so they present a number of challenges when they are used for determining the outcomes of an intervention
  - If produce is purchased in bulk, we cannot determine when it will be consumed
  - Some grocery store receipts do not include the weights of fruits and vegetables, so the quantity of produce purchased has to be estimated by price
  - Using weights from the grocery store receipt does not account for unconsumed waste from fruits and vegetables
  - Despite high pre-intervention knowledge about fruits and vegetable, participants’ actual purchase of fruits and vegetables remained low. This study reinforces the need to target interventions aimed at knowledge application

References

- http://fruitsandveggiesmornatters.org